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PLAYER'S PC STRATEGY GUIDE

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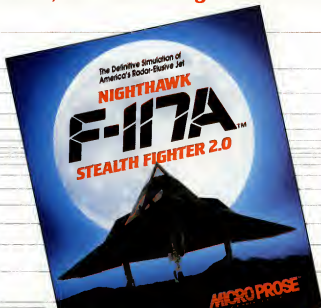
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The image shows three computer monitors stacked and displaying various baseball statistics. The top monitor shows a list of players and their stats. The middle monitor shows a detailed view of a player's statistics. The bottom monitor shows a table of team statistics.



STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.

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exciting new PC games and
products announced at
Summer CES

GAME Player's PC STRATEGY GUIDE

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APA

EDITOR'S NOTES

We're especially pleased in this issue to offer a close-up look at some recent learning software packages that also happen to be wonderfully entertaining. To have educational packages — with real learning value — that can also be highly entertaining is a relatively new phenomenon.

Just five years ago, there was only a small percentage of educational titles that were truly exceptional in both areas. Many of the learning titles of that time were simple, uninspired drill-and-practice routines, which, not surprisingly, did little to hold a child's attention. Breakthrough titles, such as those from Broderbund's Carmen Sandiego series, did much to change, even revolutionize, the way software houses and consumers viewed the educational software market. In this issue, Leslie Eisner brings her expertise and knowledge of learning software to focus on some of the best available titles — for all age

groups — that you should know about. The story begins on page 12.

In the area of pure entertainment, we're greatly impressed with Disney Software's new *Hare Raising Havoc*, the subject of this month's cover story. The combination of traditional Disney cartoon animation, creative sound effects and voice characterizations with challenging puzzles make this a remarkable new game. You'll find the story, with lots of photos, on page 20.

Elsewhere in this issue, be sure to check out our coverage of the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in "GuideLines" (p. 73) and "The Desktop General" (p.44). We attended this annual event in Chicago this past June to see nearly 100 new titles displayed or announced, and many of them are exciting products — look for full coverage in the months ahead.

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Editorial Director

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Another Eastern block falls.

There's a new "TRIS on the block. Its name is WORDTRIS. And if you love TETRIS, this latest fast-action, falling block, Soviet game will boggle your mind.

This time the falling pieces are letter blocks. Form them

into words and score points. As each block falls, it pushes down the blocks below, producing an ever-changing kaleidoscope of letters where scoring opportunities appear - and vanish - at the blink of an eye.

Create words horizontally or vertically, but don't put all your E's in one BASKET. Because

every time a word lines up, *poof!* those letters disappear, and the blocks below pop up to fill the spaces. So whenever you earn points you stir up the alphabet soup. And suddenly that falling M has no HOME to go to.

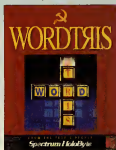
WORDTRIS keeps raining vowels and consonants until you've collected enough words to move to the next level, or the well fills up. Of course, each successive round ups the ante as the blocks fall ever faster. But you can choose your difficulty level to match your skills, and select from single player, cooperative, competitive, head-to-head or tournament modes. The built-in 30,000 word dictionary verifies even the most obscure word.

Set the difficulty level at 10 and you'll find WORDTRIS harder to keep up with than the changes in Eastern Europe.

WORDTRIS. Another great game from the TETRIS people.



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LINKS CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE — BAY HILL CLUB

Though *Links* has proven to be the standard by which all other golf simulations should be judged, its designers don't appear to be resting on their laurels. Just months after the release of two very impressive course disks — *Firestone* and *Bountiful* — Access has added another jewel to its crown.

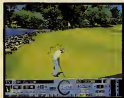
The *Bay Hill Club Championship Course* reaffirms that

Nestle Invitational. Bay Hill is a gambler's dream, with more potential boons and risks than the other three *Links* courses combined. A perfect example is the third hole, a 395-yard par four. An oval lake hugs the fairway, which wraps around a smallish green fronted by two traps. A nifty player can try to carry the water off the tee in hopes of ending up with a short



Links is unrivaled in its realism, playing options, and graphics. Along with the Torrey Pines course that comes with the game, the three additional courses provide a stunning array of unique challenges.

The Bay Hill Club Course was designed by Arnold Palmer, and is home of the



chip to the green — and a good chance for a birdie. The safe approach is to stick to land, using long iron shots to settle for par.

Scenarios such as this make the *Bay Hill Club Championship Course* the most challenging of the *Links* courses. The graphic realism, a result of digitized photographs and a 256-color palette, is downright uncanny. And to further enhance *Links'* reputation for graphic excellence, it appears that the scenery of *Bay Hill Club* features even more colors and flourishes of detail than any previous course.

— B.C.

OPERATION DESERT STORM SCENARIO DISK

Interest in high-tech air combat capabilities is at an all-time high following the war in the Gulf, and this timely simulation from MicroProse puts you in the pilot's seat. Designed for use with the company's popular *F-15 Strike Eagle II* air-combat simulation, this scenario disk offers a remarkable variety of missions — many of which you may already be familiar with from watching television coverage of the war. Each mission includes a primary and a secondary target, plus all the dogfighting you care to have.

The simulation offers varying levels of difficulty as well as easily toggled graphics-detail options to accommodate the speed of your PC.

You can fly on any of eight historically accurate missions in the Gulf, or choose an array of general air strikes. You can help knock out Iraq's early-warning radar facilities, weaken Saddam's command-and-control structure by hitting the Defense Ministry or the



Presidential Palace in Baghdad, or go hunting for fixed-site or mobile Scuds. You can even help stop the massive oil spill at the Sea Island pumping station or cut off supply lines and bridges to Republican Guards.

There are night flight conditions in the Desert Storm scenario, and the graphics and control capabilities are excellent. The scenario disk also includes two more theaters of operation — the North Cape and Central Europe — that are found in MicroProse's *F-19 Stealth Fighter* combat simulation.

— S.B.



PERSONAL PRO

It's easy to see why golfers could get excited about a product that promises to "Knock strokes off your game!" Of course, a claim like that arouses a fair amount of skepticism. That's why you might be surprised to find sessions with *Personal Pro* time well spent. Can it really knock strokes off your game? Only you and your golf pro will know for sure. But one thing is certain: You'll at least have a better understanding of the imperfections in your golf swing.

The new golf tutor from MicroLeague Sports does this by tailoring its advice to your particular problem or area of concern. By posing a series of multiple-choice questions regarding your swing and what occurs when you hit the ball, *Personal Pro* comes up with a list of symptoms. The program next traces these symptoms to one or more fundamental errors in your swing, then devises practical advice on how

to eliminate those flaws. Finally, a digitized golfer recreates what you're doing wrong, and demonstrates the steps you can take to improve your swing — and hopefully solve the problem.

With all the instructional golf manuals and videotapes available, most of which are less expensive than PC software, what makes *Personal Pro* a practical option to improve your golf game? For one thing, *Personal Pro* is interactive. Because the program "listens" to you, the advice you receive is custom-made for your golf game. Books and tapes only give general advice, which doesn't change as your golf game progresses.

Perhaps the greatest attraction of *Personal Pro* is that it illustrates, with words and actions, what you specifically need to do to rein in that hook, for example, or eliminate that shank. In fact, you can print out the program's prescription and take it with you to the golf course.

—B.C.



PLAYMAKER FOOTBALL

Every coach in the NFL would love to have the kind of control over his team that *PlayMaker Football* offers PC football fans. From drafting players to executing plays from a playbook you've created, this fine package from Broderbund gives you the power to make decisions that affect almost every aspect of your ball club.

The Player Draft feature (you choose fictional players with varied and realistic stats) means you can build a team to match your brand of football. If you favor a ground game, for example, you can draft extra-large linemen and quality running backs. Itching to test your theories about the run-and-shoot offense? Go to the draft



The game's Chalkboard Editor is its crowning glory. This feature allows you to design your own plays, or alter the plays in the program's default playbook. Whether you're working on a complicated passing scheme or a simple quarterback sneak, you dictate all your players' assignments. And the menu-driven, mouse-based interface makes creating plays fast and easy.

Once you've devised a battle plan, you can take your team to the practice field. Shuttle between the chalkboard and the practice field until you're comfortable with the playbook, then head out for some real competition.

For a mobile, accurate passer and a speedy receiving crew.

Bringing all this to life are *PlayMaker Football*'s clean, unobtrusive graphics. Though not spectacular — indeed, the figures look like X's and O's — the visuals give you a clear view of what's happening on the field.

Football fanatics will be delighted with the complexity of the numerous options in *PlayMaker Football*. The program is flexible enough, however, to appeal to fans who only have a general knowledge of gridiron science.

—B.C.



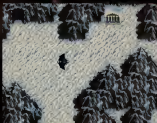
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OLD, AND DIE THREE TIMES.**

**SEGA
GENESIS**

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SPIDER-MAN

Think you've got it tough on your job? Try chasing down a couple of bank robbers, battling a supercriminal, dodging the police, then commuting home by swinging on a web. That's what Peter Parker, a.k.a. Spider-Man, has had to deal with ever since he was bitten by that radioactive spider — and comic book fans love it.

If you're one of the many Spidey devotees who have gobbled up every comic book and seen every cartoon or TV show about the Web-Slinger, you should know that Paragon has just released *The Amazing Spider-Man*. In his PC debut, Spider-Man must rescue Mary Jane from the evil Mysterio, who has kidnapped her in order to lure Spider-Man to his doom.

There are healthy doses of jumping, climbing, and web-shooting in *Spider-Man*, but the real emphasis is on figuring a way out of each of the game's 250 rooms. Besides eluding robotic guards, you must activate and ride elevators, hit switches that open doors and

walls, avoid spikes, and stay off electrified floors. To complicate things, you often don't discover the result of an action until you've progressed through several rooms.

Die-hard Spider-Man fans will likely be disappointed by this incarnation of the Wall-Crawler. Even on a 386 computer, this tiny Spider-Man moves at an irritatingly slow pace. With all those rooms you've got to escape from, a faster pace seems in order. Whether you use a keyboard or joystick, controlling Spidey can be awfully frustrating, especially in the close confines found deeper in the game.

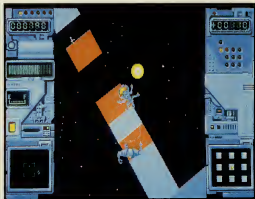
There isn't a VGA version of *The Amazing Spider-Man*, but the designers did a good job with the crisp, colorful EGA graphics. The game supports Ad Lib sound cards, but unfortunately the music and sound effects really don't enhance the action.

The Amazing Spider-Man is a good effort, but as it stands it can be recommended only to Spider-Man enthusiasts.

—S.P.



ROTOX



One consequence of the PC gaming market's steady growth in the U.S. is the arrival of more games from abroad. Although the prospect of a greater variety of titles for the PC is exciting, it may take awhile for gamers on this side of the pond to get used to the way European games are packaged and designed.

ROTOX, from British-based U.S. Gold, embodies many of the strengths and weaknesses of European games, although the game's storyline doesn't identify it as coming from foreign shores.

Beginning in the 21st century, scientists began attempts at creating robots that could think independently. When the limitations of completely mechanical devices became obvious, the next step was to take citizens too poor to protest and replace their brains with artificial intelligence units.

But soon the scientists took a new approach — they left the brain intact, but replaced almost all the body parts with armor, implants,

and weapons. The prototype is *ROTOX* (RemOTE Offworld Xenoprobe).

ROTOX puts you at the controls of that unit for its initial tests. You move through nine levels, each made up of nine areas, destroying the cybernetic systems programmed to stop *ROTOX*. Combat is tough, but the real challenge in *ROTOX* is maneuvering your character through narrow pathways and rotating floors, and determining the order in which you should tackle the different areas.

ROTOX differs from most U.S. games in several ways. There's no save-game feature, a deficiency that's almost fatal in a game this difficult. Instead of using cursor keys or a joystick to control movement, you use letter keys on the keyboard. Expect quite a wait for each new game as the program "installs" the first level. And at a time when almost every new game features interesting sound effects, it's disappointing that *ROTOX* doesn't support any sound boards.

—S.P.

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KIDS AND COMPUTERS

*PC Games
That Make
Learning Fun*

Leslie Eiser

Educational software isn't boring anymore—and there are a host of new packages that prove it. These games, which span all age groups, go far beyond the humdrum practice drills from the early days of educational computing. So far, in fact, that kids won't even know they're learning.

We all know exactly how it happens. You sit down in front of the computer for a quick look at the latest game and suddenly there's a tug on your sleeve. "Hey, can I help you play...please?"

Sound familiar? You've just been hit by a bad case of Computer Interruptus, one of the most common user ailments. This debilitating infirmity is frequently found in every household with at least one computer and one child under the age of 12. But

now you and your family need suffer no longer. There are games for the younger set that feature graphics as thrilling as the latest flight simulator (if you happen to be 7), sound effects that will keep you playing the game just to hear them again (if you happen to like Mickey Mouse), and music so good even you will want to sing along. Best of all, these games aren't just fun—they're educational.



YOUNGER PRESCHOOLERS

To keep younger preschoolers entertained, look for programs that offer stunning graphics, little or no keyboard input, and captivating storylines. Bright color schemes that take advantage of EGA/VGA graphics and stimulating sound effects using digitized

voices should complete the package.

Don't compromise on quality. A bored child won't complain, he'll just turn away from the computer. "No word" programs like *Katie's Farm* and *McGee at the Fun Fair*, from Lawrence Productions, are utterly captivating to children in the 2- to 5-year-old range. Designed to be super simple to use, each of these programs lets your youngster direct the action by using a mouse or pressing an arrow key and pushing Enter. Seen through a child's eyes, McGee and Katie live in worlds filled with surprising things. Designed to encourage conversation and a sense of wonder, these programs educate by experience, not by drill and practice.

Each program in the McGee series uses the same "no word" interface with a different storyline to both entertain and educate. In *Katie's Farm*, McGee goes to



Katie's Farm

visit his cousin in the country. The pair explore the farm, feeding the horse, gathering eggs in the chicken house, and playing near the pond. *McGee at the Fun Fair* takes a look at one small aspect of life in the big city. In the park near McGee's house, there's a Fun Fair, and McGee and his friend Tony decide to go. After listening to the musicians and admiring the juggler, McGee and Tony can play on familiar pieces of park equipment like a slide and monkey bars. When they get tired of playing, they can stop at the ice-cream vendor for a quick bite or get a drink at the water fountain.

What makes each of these programs educational? Random events, reliable repetition, adorable sound effects, and attractive graphics combine to make using either *Katie's Farm* or *McGee at the Fun Fair* spellbinding for young children. Rather than focusing on direct educational content like letter recognition, programs like these give the very young user a sense of control while providing opportunities for family discussion.



McGee at the Fun Fair

By asking children to predict what balloon animal the clown will make this time, you are helping them learn to predict actions based on past experience. By giving them the opportunity to make all the decisions, you encourage their sense of themselves, making them more independent. Put several children in front of the computer and you'll encourage cooperative social behavior in a positive environment. Since nobody loses, and there are no wrong answers, you give every child the opportunity to succeed.



OLDER PRESCHOOLERS

If your children are old enough to find most of the letters and numbers on the keyboard, they're ready to play either of two excellent programs from Disney Software, *Mickey's ABC's: A Day at the Fair* and *Mickey's 123's: The Big Surprise Party*. Featuring most of the well-known Disney cartoon characters, these programs use absolutely wonderful graphics (the CGA version is



Mickey's 123's: The Big Surprise Party

super, and the VGA images are sure to impress your friends) and some hilarious

animated sequences. Coupled with the reasonably priced Disney Sound Source and the resulting excellent sound effects and voices, these programs are fun to use, astonishingly entertaining, and even educational.

In *Mickey's 123's*, Mickey starts the game by asking for help in organizing a surprise party for one of his friends. Using only the number keys, your youngster will decide who to invite, get the invitations delivered, shop for the food and party decorations at Goofy's store (no money





Mickey's ABC's:
A Day at the Fair

needed), and even create a magical toy surprise. When everything is ready, it's lights out until the surprise guest arrives. After dinner everyone goes home, and Mickey gets ready to organize another party for a different friend. Primarily designed to

reinforce number recognition skills, Mickey's 123's does more. It provides a social setting for some rather interesting number activities, and provides very immediate feedback to every key press. The helpful Parent's Guide makes the program even more educational by providing lots of detailed suggestions for improving your child's ability to recognize numbers.

Press any alphabet key in Mickey's ABC's and something exciting is sure to happen. Designed to help children learn the alphabet, this program rewards every key press with an animated sequence, from pie and watermelon-eating contests to sack races and free ice-cream cones. There's even a television show (press "T" when Mickey is home) starring Donald and Goofy.

As with the McGee series, occasional random events keep kids pressing the keys while learning more and more about the relationships between letters, words, and actions. To make sure kids remember which letter they pressed and the word to which it corresponds, this information is displayed on the screen in large letters. Eight pages of detailed advice in the accompanying Parent's Guide

will help you improve your child's learning experience with the program.

While both Mickey's 123's and Mickey's ABC's will produce sound through your computer's internal speakers, the quality is quite poor. To really hear the music and listen in on the conversations between Mickey and his friends, you'll need to use the Disney Sound Source. Plug this external box into your parallel printer port and listen to the programs come alive. Detailed instructions for using the programs are given orally, and in Mickey's ABC's a female voice says the name of every letter as it is pressed and clearly pronounces every corresponding word. Given the importance of audio feedback when working with young learners, getting the Sound Source isn't just a good idea—it can make the difference between learning something and just playing a game.



MIDDLE-AGE KIDS

Getting this hard-to-figure "middle-aged" group (ages 7 to 9) to sit down is easy —



Number Munchers

provided you give them lots of fast action, an exciting storyline, and significant rewards for achievement. The

games for quick wits and even quicker fingers are *Treasure Mountain*, *Midnight Rescue*, and *Number Munchers*. Far too much fun to be classified as purely educational, these games clearly demonstrate that learning can be just as close as the nearest computer.

Staying alive long enough to watch the cartoon reward at the end of three rounds of MECC's *Number Munchers* is pretty tough, but that's what makes this game fun. Played on a 4 x 6 grid, this is a math game with a difference. Winning a round consists of moving an animated number muncher around the board, directing him to eat only the correct answers to a math problem posed at the top of the screen. Unfortunately, the task is complicated by the presence of mischievous Troggles, who change answers indiscriminately and occasionally eat the number muncher. Different levels of play and a high-score table keep the competition keen. A new obstacle is added when a level is completed, and the number of Troggles moving around the grid increases dramatically. High scorers will need good math skills and eyes at the sides of their heads.

Designed to be used in school as well as at home, this program provides parent-controlled options that allow the program to be used over a very wide range of ability levels.

Treasure Mountain, one of the Super Solvers Series packages from The Learning Company, is a wonderful game for kids just starting to

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read. The goal of this game is for players to make their way through the levels on *Treasure*



Treasure Mountain

Mountain in an effort to frustrate archfiend Morty Maxwell. They'll have to start by capturing some of the elves that live on the mountain. Each trapped elf gives the player a

gold coin, or poses a word puzzle. Correct solutions earn clue words, and clue words have to be used to locate the hidden treasures.

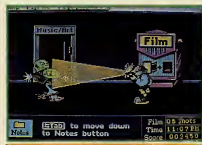
Like any good arcade game, there are lots of different levels to master. Like any good educational game, the word puzzles are carefully sequenced so that youngsters having trouble at one level don't suddenly find themselves trying to solve problems way too difficult for them. Well crafted, and very entertaining to play, this is a perfect solution to Computer Interruptus for the 5- to 9-year-old set.



FOR GOOD READERS, 7 AND UP

Older kids need more strenuous reading activities, but the same stimulating and entertaining packaging. To get both into one box is tough, but *Midnight Rescue*, another SuperSolvers entree from The Learning Company, does a great job of challenging kids both from an educational and

an arcade point of view. Morty Maxwell, the dean of mischief and skulduggery, is threatening to make the school invisible if your youngster doesn't stop him. The job will require some fast keyboard work and pretty good reading skills. Fortunately, the reading content section isn't timed, and kids can catch their breath while thinking about the solutions. Once back in the halls of the school, however, anything goes. Variable levels of difficulty, point scores, and increasing speed keep the action going, despite the rather clear-cut educational content.



Midnight Rescue and Challenge of the Ancient Empires!



AN ALTERNATIVE TO NINTENDO

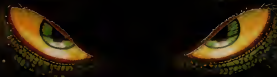
Looking for something besides Nintendo for those 9- to 13-year-old kids in your house?

Want something educational as well as entertaining? *Challenge of the Ancient Empires!* — also from The Learning Company — is enough of a challenge to keep even the most proficient Nintendo user occupied for hours. And you can be sure that kids are getting more than just nimble fingers out of the time they spend in front of the computer.

Multiple levels, repeatable caverns, creepy monsters, incredible graphics, fantastic sound even without a sound card, and a keyboard interface that only a nine-year-old could love combine to make *Challenge of the Ancient Empires!* the closest thing to an arcade game the educational software market has produced. From bouncing off the walls in Turbo Tennes to shooting

light beams at trick triggers hidden in the most unusual places, this is a program that looks, sounds, and even acts like a Nintendo game. But there's more to education than meets the eye, and *Ancient Empires* offers young users a series of mind puzzles that may very well challenge their adult helpers. Trying to figure out how to open a four-way door using three switches is a pretty stiff task. Doing it while you're fending off cave creatures is enough to send an adult back quickly to *Wing Commander*. Your kids are going to love figuring out the puzzles. If you ask nicely, they might even teach you how to use the Turbo Tennes.

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MINIMUMS, MAXIMUMS, AND NOTHING IN BETWEEN

If you are serious about convincing your children that educational games can be fun, be prepared to add some fairly

adult peripherals. Although all the programs reviewed here will run on MS-DOS computers with one floppy disk drive, CGA monitors, and internal speakers, prepare to be disappointed with the results on that type of hardware. To get the full effect, you're going to need a hard drive, a sound board, and EGA/VGA graphics. Since most new games for adults utilize the most advanced

graphics and sound hardware available, you've got double the reason to upgrade your system.

There's no longer any reason to put up with Computer Interruptus at your house. Get the kids a game of their own to play, and sit back. Who knows—they might even let you help.

GP

SOFTWARE SOURCES



KATIE'S FARM & MCGEE AT THE FUN FAIR

Lawrence Productions
1800 South 35th Street
Galesburg, MI 49053-9687
1-800-421-4157

640K memory required; supports VGA, MCGA, EGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; supports Sound Blaster, Covox Speech Thing, and Tandy Digital Sound



MICKEY'S 123'S: THE BIG SURPRISE PARTY & MICKEY'S ABC'S: A DAY AT THE FAIR

Walt Disney Computer Software
500 S. Buena Vista Street
Burbank, CA 91521
(818) 567-5360

512K memory required; supports EGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; supports The Sound Source



NUMBER MUNCHERS

MECC
3490 Lexington Avenue North
St. Paul, MN 55126
1-800-228-3504 or (612) 481-3500

512K memory required; supports VGA, EGA, MCGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics

TREASURE MOUNTAIN, MIDNIGHT RESCUE & CHALLENGE OF THE ANCIENT EMPIRES

The Learning Company
6493 Kaiser Drive
Fremont, CA 94555
1-800-852-2255

512K memory required; supports VGA, MCGA, EGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; supports Ad Lib and Sound Blaster sound boards

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Ramses II



Alexander The Great



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Help!!!!

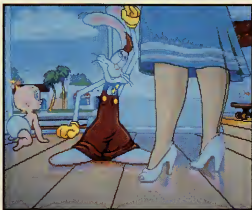


HARE RAISING HAVOC:

Disney's New Animated Interactive Cartoon

SELBY BATEMAN

Mommy's going out shopping, and poor Roger has to play babysitter for the fast-moving Baby Herman.



That fish has really chomped down on poor Roger! Hmmm...wonder why the fish is so upset?

Baby Herman has once again slipped away from accident-prone but resilient Roger Rabbit. And unless Roger can escape from the house and make his way across town to find and return Baby Herman before Mother gets home from shopping, it's "back to the science lab!" for our favorite furry Toon.

That's the basic premise in Disney Software's

new Roger Rabbit PC entertainment package, *Hare Raising Havoc*. But it doesn't begin to describe the unique blend of cartoon mayhem and Rube Goldberg-style puzzles that makes *Hare Raising Havoc* such

a groundbreaking piece of fun.

Although this is technically the second Roger Rabbit PC game from Disney, it's the first to really capture the feel of classic Disney animation — the lively sound effects, amazing voice characterizations, and that irrepressible and daffy cartoon magic.

If you're one of those few individuals still unfamiliar with Roger Rabbit, Baby Herman, and the rest of the wackiest backup cast in cartoon history, run immediately





Jessica, Roger's curaceous wife, seems to have stopped by to wish her hubby all the best. Time's wasting, Roger.

household item or backyard tool can suddenly become an instrument of sheer cartoon terror. One wrong move and Roger is flying through the air, banging his head, getting sucked down drains, slipping and tripping on objects, and

being twisted like a pretzel.

You don't have to learn any complicated instructions to play any of the sequences in *Hare Raising Havoc*.

Using a joystick or the keyboard, simply move Roger left or right, then press a key or a joystick button to get him to perform an action. Fans of the legendary American cartoonist, Rube Goldberg, will very quickly catch onto—and be delighted by—the wacky steps required to keep Roger moving after Baby Herman. Almost every action has a reaction, and the correct combination of move-

ment succeeds in helping Roger get closer to his goal. Complicating matters is the ticking clock that pops up periodically to remind you that there's

only 60 minutes (Toon minutes) before Mother returns.

The only major criticism some experienced gamers are likely to have with *Hare Raising Havoc* is that the game may be too short, especially for extremely talented puzzle pros. But most players will find plenty of challenge in the game's seven scenes. Even after you've helped Roger succeed, you'll be trying to beat your previous best time, or surprising your friends with the great animation and delightful sounds.



Notice how Roger's eyes seem to bug right out of his head just before that rake handle hits his face?



Great back yard, nice weather, steaks on the grill—but what's that dog hanging around for?



Yeeowww!! Watch out for that hole, Roger!



What's Baby Herman doing atop the Tasty Moo Dairy? That's a mighty big bottle of milk.



What next? Roger seems unsure what to do, so help him make the right moooveoves.



Director Netische Darjeignugen uses an anvil-sized mallet to gently correct Roger's acting errors.

To cram all the animation, sound effects, and digitized voices into this game is no small feat. *Hare Raising Havoc* takes up about 5 megabytes on your hard disk, and when you see the game in action, you'll understand why.

GP

Hardware requirements: 640K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; supports Disney's Sound Source, Sound Blaster, Tandy sound, and PS/1 Audio card; joystick optional.

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With the support of the King (church and the Duke of the town) you can build a castle, build a wall, and build a town. The King will be with you.



IBM Screens Pictured

enemies, then sit in a cold damp castle and wonder why no one likes you. All the neat things that went into making the medieval ages a swell time are in this package!

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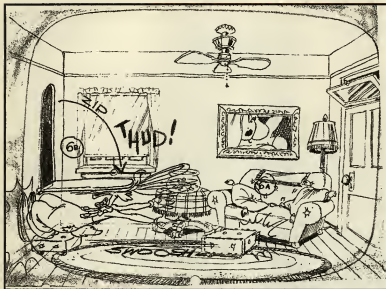
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CASTLES

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!



This early storyboard of Roger moving in the first room of the game gives some idea of the attention to detail required to bring this interactive animated puzzle game to the PC screen.



By now, game players are used to hearing the analogy that developing a computer game is similar to creating a Hollywood production. The best PC games have a producer, artists, musicians, composers, programmers, designers, sound people, voice talent — the same types of components that go into making a motion picture.

Hare Raising Havoc is cer-

tainly no exception. Producer Sam Palahnuik and a core group of about ten other people worked more than a year to bring this latest Disney game to the PC screen. Moving from initial rough-sketch storyboards, the project unfolded much like a movie or a cartoon. A Hollywood sound effects company was hired to develop the best bangs, whirs, plops, and whizzes. A Hollywood composer created the music. The professional voice actors who were used for the movie, "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?," recreated Roger, Baby Herman, and Mommy for the game.

"We went into the studio with a script, and it might take 12 takes to get a line just right," says Palahnuik. "The game and graphics are only half the game."

The 30-year-old Palahnuik, who's been with Disney Studios more than three years now, wanted *Hare Raising Havoc* to look, sound, and feel like vintage Disney work. Having produced the first Roger Rabbit PC game for Disney, Palahnuik felt that a second one should have a

number of major changes.

"I wanted to do a Roger Rabbit game that was more fun, easier to play, and more satisfying," he says. He also wanted the character of Roger to be larger in order to help capture the unique feel of the wacky rabbit. "I sat down and came up with the idea for this action-puzzle game, and management liked it." He then approached the outside development team of BlueSky Software in San Diego, people that he'd known personally and whose work he'd been familiar with for years.

The design criteria were simple. First, create a game that was easy to learn and difficult to master.

"We have spent a lot of time focus testing, and in all of the testing we had maybe one person out of 30 who got stuck. There will be a few people who just don't get it," he says. "But for most people there is that moment of *aha!*"

And the second criterion was to have a game filled with unexpected surprises. "People love surprises," says Palahnuik. "People play games for that moment of exhilaration, when they see something that they haven't seen before."

Palahnuik also expects people to get hooked on *Hare Raising Havoc's* unique blend of cartoon animation, puzzle solving, and wonderful sounds and voices.

"Some people might say, 'Why doesn't it have 50 rooms?'" he chuckles. "But a candle that burns quite brightly doesn't burn as long as it might."

Nothing would please Palahnuik more than for *Hare Raising Havoc* to be a success, enabling him to get back into the studio for an even bigger and more elaborate visit to Toontown.

GP

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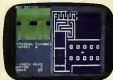
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MS-DOS Screens Pictured.

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With his planes held as collateral by Lomax, "Lucky" Jake Masters has only two options — take a final season dive off this pier, or take Lomax up on his offer.

Heart of China

GARY MEREDITH



His bar has always been a good place to dig up some information, even though the proprietor thinks it's not a good idea to serve you any of the hard stuff. Could it be because you trashed the place the last time you overimbibed?



You don't find the elusive Zhao Chi—he finds you. And now that he's found you, how do you convince him that flying is as safe as riding a rickshaw?



The Yankee Eagle is fueled and ready to go, but can you figure out a way to get past the immigration official? Taking the fake passport offered by Madam Wu was not one of your best moves.

an offer that can't be refused.

It didn't lighten Lomax's wallet too much to acquire the deed to Airborn Imports, and hold the threat of foreclosure over Jake's head as an incen-

tive for his cooperation. But even though Lomax couldn't care less how Jake comes through the mission, he does want Kate back in one piece, so he suggests that Masters ac-

quire the services of a mysterious ninja, Zhao Chi. With Chi, and the incentive of a \$200,000 reward, Jake heads out for Li Deng's fortress in Chengdu.

But saving Kate from Li Deng is only the beginning of Jake's troubles. Kate is slowly dying from a snakebite she received during the rescue attempt, and her sole hope of survival is an antidote which can only be found in the legendary Kathmandu, high in the mountains of Nepal. After nearly meeting with disaster during landing, Jake must help the peasants overthrow a brutal warlord before the party can fly on to Istanbul.

After all this, "Lucky" would seem to be an inapt nickname for Jake. It becomes even more ironic when, after his arrival in Istanbul, he's thrown into prison for sully the name (among other things) of the local nabob's daughter. This time it's Kate's turn to rescue Jake, and as they ride off into the sunset aboard the Orient Express, Jake has one more task ahead of him—to finally win the heart of the lovely (and semi-grateful) Kate.

Heart of China, from Dynamix, is a wonderful example of how role-playing graphic adventure games are evolving. No longer are characters and storylines drawn in stark black and white. In *Heart of China*, everything is sketched in shades of gray, with intriguing subtleties of personality



ately, things haven't gone well for "Lucky" Jake Masters. A flying ace in World War I, Jake now barely gets by on the money

he earns running Airborn Imports, carrying goods from the interior of China to his base in Hong Kong. It's not enough to insure him an early retirement, but it was his business, mortgage and all—until tycoon E.A. Lomax needed a "favor."

When Lomax's beautiful daughter Kate, a nurse working with the poor of 1930s China, is kidnapped by the powerful warlord Li Deng, Lomax sees Jake as the perfect—and expendable—choice for a "hero." But how could he convince Jake to come to his aid? An influential man like Lomax knows that the best way to get what you want is to make someone



The rickshaw is the preferred mode of travel in Hong Kong during the thirties. Don't waste too much time in town—each day you use will deduct 20,000 dollars from your reward.

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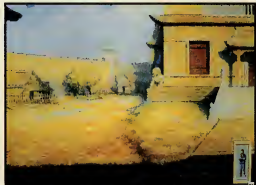


While you're in transit to Chengdu, it's a good idea to save your game. Many of the landing sites you see will mean a fiery crash — and certain death for Jake and Chi.



Finding Li Deng's fortress is easy, but getting inside is another matter. If you can find another "companion," and make a deal with one of the guards, you'll be able to walk through the front gate.

and plotting that are quite new to this kind of game. As with all games of this type, you can either win or lose in *Heart of China*, but unlike other adventures, there are degrees of winning or losing. You can even lose when you win, a concept that brings *Heart of China* considerably closer to reality than many other adventure games. And in this game, as in real life, there are a number of different ways to go about solving a problem, an approach which contrasts markedly from the linear style



With Chi's ninja training, it's only logical that he do the reconnoitering before Jake enters the grounds. Make sure you visit the abandoned guardhouse before looking for Kate.



After creating a diversion in the dining room, you can go through the kitchen to reach the room where Kate is being held. But you'll need to tranquilize the doggie first.

of its predecessors.

This variety of choices makes *Heart of China* much more complex and deep than others in its genre, but it also makes it, surprisingly enough, an easier game to play. Because there is no one right way to do something, you have the luxury of experimenting, of finding the solution that makes the most sense to you.

When you reach Chengdu and discover Li Deng's fortress, for example, you're presented with the problem of getting inside. Ordinarily, there would only be one answer to this problem, but here you have a couple of ways in



Kate's little friends seem awfully intent on guarding her. The thought to keep in mind here is that you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.

which to enter the fortress. You can either make your way through a secret passageway at the side of the fortress, or you can somehow convince the guard to let you in through the front gate. Whatever method you choose, you'll still end up in the main house.

The game's plot variations are dependent on how you interact with other characters. In



Indy Jones, eat your heart out! Is Jake discovering talents and courage he never knew he had, or is he just showing off for the pretty lady?

BIG, BAD, AND ARMED TO THE TEETH.



Pilot's Station

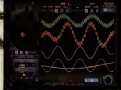


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- Multi-position bomber simulation with Pilot, Navigator, Electronic Warfare and Offensive Weapons.
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You're not just a Pilot, responsible for takeoff and landing, mid-air refueling and other basic maneuvers. As Navigator you'll plot a course halfway around the world, keeping the mission on track; as Electronic Warfare Officer you're glued to a radar scope, hunting for threats, jamming signals, keeping the aircraft hidden; as Offensive Weapons Officer you have massive firepower at your disposal: air-to-air missiles, anti-radar missiles, and air mine rockets for defense, and a 3,000 lb TV/infrared guided glide bomb for the final attack.

With missions designed by Dale Brown, B-52 navigator and best-selling author, Megafortress isn't just another flight simulator; it's an adventure in the reality of strategic air assault today.



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This vintage tank was a familiar sight on battlefields in the latter part of World War I. Unfortunately for Jake, the only view he ever had of its ilk was from about 3,000 feet up.



Kate's fading fast, so there's no time to make it back to Hong Kong or Istanbul, let alone Paris. Her only hope lies in the mist-shrouded Himalayas, and the mysterious Kathmandu.

each conversation you can choose between different dialogue options, which in turn can elicit several very different responses. When you're in Ho's bar, looking for Zhao Chi, it doesn't pay to back down when confronted by one of the thugs in the bar. It turns out that this guy is one of Chi's gang, and how you stand up to him will decide whether or not you get to speak with Chi. You have to be tough with him, but not so tough



Jake has made better landings, but at least our party avoided learning the terminal velocity of a falling Ford Tri-Motor. Now someone will have to brave the icy wasteland and find help.

that he and his buddies decide they've heard enough, and throw you out on your ear.

Conversely, you'll want to act like a pussycat when dealing with Ama in Kathmandu, or you'll never get your plane off the ground. When the time comes to renegotiate your deal with Lomax, just remember that he respects a guy who can play hardball.

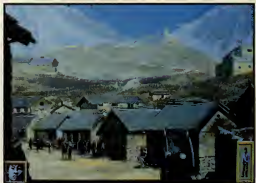
Although there are a lot of differences between *Hearts of China* and its forebears, a



Kubla will sell you some gas for the Yankee Eagle, but unless you can find (or make) some sort of toy to placate him, he'll insist on coming with you.

couple of basic premises remain the same. One of these is that whenever you enter a scene, you look at everything, and take anything that isn't nailed down. An object's eventual use may not be self-evident, but with the unlimited carrying capacity you enjoy, there's no reason not to take everything. Depending on the plot branch you follow, many of the objects you find won't be necessary. But you can't afford to take a chance by passing up something just because it seems totally useless.

Another similarity to other graphic adventures is the necessity of saving your game often. Although the primary reason for this precaution is



The friendly locals place Kate in Ama's care, just in the nick of time. Jake and Chi should scout around for a way out of Kathmandu while she recuperates.

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"I HAVE"

CYBERCON III (2011-?)

Well almost. You have bravely volunteered to execute 'Operation Nemesis' - The destruction of the merciless Super Defence computer game mod: Cybercon III.

Equipped with your enhanced power armour salvaged from the wreckage of Cybercon III's onslaught, you must penetrate the defence

CYBERCON

complex protecting Cybercon III's brain stem and deactivate it. Cybercon III is a game of epic proportions and features:

- The ultimate 3D environment - named 'Real World' - it contains the fastest, smoothest scrolling 3D graphics ever seen.
- Battle and puzzle your way through a huge complex containing over 400 unique locations.
- Intelligent defenses that react to every move you make.
- Sampled sound effects.
- Unique Picture-in-Picture mode. Allows you to monitor enemy movements.
- Over 1.3 million lines of code crammed onto 7 disks!

Getting in was the easy part; getting out will take everything you've got!



Screen shots are only intended to be a glimpse of the graphics and not the actual graphics which may considerably differ in detail in quality and appearance and are subject to the complete specifications.

FORMAT AVAILABILITY: Amiga - IBM PC, AT & XT

100% compatible

GRAPHIC SUPPORT: CGA, EGA, VGA, 3 & 6 VGA, MCGA

SONIC SUPPORT: PC Speakers, Ad Lib, Roland

MEMORY REQ: 512K (640K for 256 color mode)



Game designed by Ricardo Polo

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Although the High Lama is friendly enough, his cryptic comments do little to ease Jake's mind. Chi, however, is more familiar with Eastern philosophies, and realizes what the Lama is trying to say.

the constant possibility of a quick and unexpected death, the multiple plot branching also makes frequent saves a must. In many interactions your first encounter sets the tone for all subsequent meetings; if you've put your foot in your mouth the first time, there's virtually no way to extract it. So save before entering into a dangerous situation, and before making any important decisions or dealing with any

key characters (you'll discover that "key" describes most of the characters in this game).

Heart of China plays much like a movie, with many of the subtleties of the

film medium. Indeed, the game was constructed as a movie, with live actors playing out scenes which were then painstakingly painted over to suggest a pulp adventure straight out of the thirties. Dynamix even had problems



Through a simple gift, Jake is able not only to free the people of Kathmandu from the oppressive reign of Bojan, but also to recruit enough villagers to turn the Yankee Eagle around for a takeoff.



Once in Istanbul, Jake manages to get himself arrested by the police for an ill-advised dalliance with the nabob's daughter a few years back. Now Kate must find a way to rescue her rescuer.



A game of chance on the streets is the only way Kate can get enough money to buy the items she needs to free Jake. Watch out for Mohmar; after you've won a few times, he'll try to break your concentration in an effort to recoup his losses.



With a rather embarrassed Jake in tow, Kate heads her camel back toward the airfield. They arrive just in time to see the Yankee Eagle—and presumably poor Chi—blown to bits.

similar to those facing filmmakers, from setting up difficult action shots to having to shoot around the leading lady's pregnancy.

The game's designers have succeeded, through vivid staging, in giving a feeling of action to a game that has relatively little animation. The effort certainly shows in a game that is as great to see and hear (an excellent soundtrack rounds out the presentation) as it is to play.



Heading to Paris on the Orient Express, a sultra Kate tries to discover what Jake really has in mind. Consider your answers carefully.

GP

Hardware Requirements: 640K minimum memory (286 processor or better highly recommended); VGA graphics; major sound boards supported; mouse or joystick recommended.

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The Acme Detective Agency has certainly made great strides since your last hitch with them. Its former headquarters could have been used as a dictionary illustration for the adjective "seedy."

Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?

GARY MEREDITH



ou thought you'd seen the last of Carmen Sandiego and her gang when you nabbed her for time crimes, only a few short

months ago. It seems, however, that there hasn't been a prison built yet that's secure enough to keep the resourceful Ms. Sandiego incarcerated for very long, because she's back with a vengeance in *Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?*

Carmen has a new gang of henchmen now, and Time Bureau reports indicate that she's got her sights set on famous icons of American history. Acme Detective Agency has once again been given the task of bringing Carmen and her gang to justice, which means they'll need to hire extra Time



Acme's recent prosperity has bred a new, strictly business attitude — no casual banter with the receptionist nowadays.

Detectives for the job. That, of course, is where you come in.

Unfortunately, the folks at Acme seem to have a bad memory for faces, and the personnel office's cluttered files on past employees aren't much help either, so you'll have to start at the bottom even if you've worked for them before.



Every time you sign in, you're shown your current job title and the number of cases you've completed. The cases get tougher as you go.

Although Acme is known for quick promotions based on the number of cases solved, the difficulty level of your assignments increases in direct proportion to your climb up the corporate ladder.

Your first step is to sign in with the secretary at Acme. The appearance of the office has improved considerably with Acme's new-found prosperity, but there seems to have been a corresponding slide in friendliness. Until you've successfully completed a few cases, in fact, you won't get much more than a perfunctory acknowledgment from Acme's director, and a growl from Stretch, the company tracking hound.

Once you've signed in, you'll be given your most important piece of equipment — a brand new Chronoskimmer 450SL, with a computer system

that's greatly improved over the setups found in earlier Chronoskimmers. If you've worked for Acme before, the controls on the Chronoskimmer will be no surprise, and even if you haven't, the interface is straightforward enough to operate intuitively.

A new feature of this model is the Electronic Mail module. This can provide you with information beyond what you're able to pick up from direct investigation, so it's a good idea to activate the Mail icon whenever it flashes. In travel mode, the Chronoskimmer displays a map of the U.S., divided into five geographic regions (East, South, Midwest, Southwest, and West) and nine segments of time (from the earliest colonial days to the present).




Once you've received your orders, it's time to zip off to the scene where your suspect was last spotted. The sophisticated sleuthing equipment in your Chronoskimmer can pick up the cold-est of trails.

With earlier games in Broderbund's Carmen Sandiego series, you were given only a few possible destinations

Your boss is already favorably impressed with your work. Stretch, the company tracking hound, is still not sure you have what it takes.





FALCON 3.0

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The bogey came out of nowhere. You see him just off your tail. The adrenalin hits you like a fist. You call your wingman: "Viper One, I've got a bandit on my six. This is not good..."

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You go to afterburner and your Falcon jumps, slamming you back in the seat. The MiG 29 has just reached missile range... There! He's fired, the deadly rocket screams toward you, seeing nothing but the heat of your exhaust. Without thinking, you drop a series of flares hoping to confuse it, and yank back on the stick... 50 degrees... 80... over the top... your Head Up display shows you're pulling 9g's...

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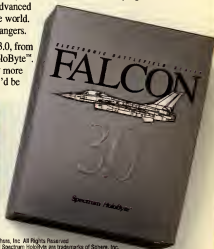
...Nearly blacked out, you ease forward on the stick. The g's drop, and you can see again. There he is! You're on HIS six now. This is going to be sweet. As you get tone you know he's yours.

True to the General Dynamics F-16 Falcon, Falcon 3.0 gives you all the exhilaration of flying one of the most advanced fighters in the world. And all the dangers.

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The Electronic Mail module often receives important information concerning a suspect's appearance or habits. The Chronoskimmer's computer can collate the data, but first you must put the information into the database.



Travel in the Chronoskimmer is a matter of displacement in both time and space. There's more accuracy with this new model, but there are also more chances to take a wrong turn.



You'll know you're on the right track when you discover one of Carmen's henchmen shadowing you. If you don't see at least one, you can safely assume you've lost the trail.

for each trip, so you could often make the correct choice by simple process of elimination. Now you can choose from all 45 destinations for each time hop. This puts an extra premium on your knowledge of American history, since there are so many wrong places and times to visit and no way of deducing the right one by "weeding out" your destination.

There is one feature of the new travel system which should prove to be a big help. Each of the five regions can be accessed on a subsidiary map that provides additional information regarding each state's entrance into the

Union. Since clues sometimes refer to statehood dates, this feature can be a valuable resource.

A case begins when Acme receives a bulletin from the Time Bureau, giving a description of the stolen item and a starting place for your investigation. When you reach the scene of the crime, you're given a thumbnail sketch of the historical significance of the location. Then it's time to start questioning witnesses and verifying rumors.

With luck (and an obliging computer) you'll soon receive your first piece of Electronic Mail, usually a hint concerning the suspect's physical appearance or other traits which may be helpful in determining his or her identity. Every bit of data specifically concerning the suspect should be immediately entered into the computer.

Early cases require you to collect only two or three pieces of information on the criminal before the computer can make a positive ID and issue a warrant. In later cases, you'll need to acquire considerably more data before the computer can narrow the selection down to one suspect. This can be rather frustrating, because you can often track down a suspect before you've accumulated



Traveling to San Francisco of the early 20th century reveals an all-too-familiar scene. You'll also find a clue which leads to the identification of the suspect. Now all you need to do is secure a warrant and track down the miscreant.

enough evidence to make an arrest.

In situations like this, you can try your luck by adding your own clues into the computer in an attempt to get a positive ID. Actually, this tactic succeeds more often than it fails, especially if you limit yourself to a category with a small number of selections, such as eye or hair color. But there is the chance, though slim, that two suspects could have highly similar physical features.

Another drawback to this tactic is the time it consumes.



The travel screen's zoom feature allows you to learn a few more details about a prospective destination. Often, the information on a state's admission to the Union will help you pinpoint a time and place you need to visit.



You know the suspect was seen in the South — but during what time period? You could make a guess, but if you're wrong, the time spent on the extra leg of your trip could mean the difference between success and failure.

You must complete each assignment within a time limit, which varies with the difficulty of the case. Within that limit, you're expected to track down the suspect, organize the evidence, get a warrant issued, and make the arrest. Each question asked, each rumor overheard, each bit of evidence entered takes time off the clock.

You'll be amazed at how quickly your allotted time gets eaten up, especially in the higher levels of the game, where you need to uncover so much more evidence to make an arrest. The time constraint also means that you must make efficient use of your Chronoskimmer—if you hope to solve a case, you can't afford the luxury of simply joyriding through time.

If you've played any of the games in the Carmen Sandiego series before, the investigation routine offers no surprises. For the uninitiated, the basic routine consists of picking up as many clues as possible from a site and using them to discern the criminal's

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Now that you've reconciled the spatial and temporal indices, you'll be able to resume your chase. Remember, you must acquire an arrest warrant before you can nab your prey.

next destination. Most clues are somewhat cryptic, demanding a fairly deep knowledge of American history. For example, a witness might mention that he heard the suspect speak of visiting the site of William McKinley's assassination. If you don't know the date and location of that event, you're out of luck.

As the cases get tougher, the clues are harder to come by, and they're also more obscure. Broderbund has provided a comprehensive encyclopedia of American history,



You've almost caught up with your quarry, and you still have 23 hours remaining in which to make the arrest. It appears that this will be one of the more successful cases of your short career.

What Happened When, to help you out, but the real fun comes from picking your brain for the answers. Of course, if you missed school the day your teacher covered William Henry Harrison, references to his campaign slogan and his connection to American Indians might be lost on you. But you'll usually find yourself

turning to the encyclopedia only as a last resort.

You may become so engrossed in journeying down some of the lesser-known pathways of American history



As you close in, Ms. Sandiego's minions will throw everything at you in a last-ditch attempt to foil the arrest. Your suspect's favorite bird is a bald eagle, but it's certain this character never appeared on a coin.

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The suspect is held up, just waiting to be flushed out by old Stretch. He's pretty excited, since he hasn't bitten a crook all week.

that you forget to play the game. As with the other Carmen Sandiego installments, *Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?* is an outstanding educational tool which makes acquiring considerable knowledge of this country's past an almost subliminal process. Before you know it, you've mentally compiled a fairly complete historical out-

line that inspires further study. If you have children, this game and its predecessors are almost necessities of the computer age.

Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego? is a worthy



This case is closed, but you'll soon learn that the job of tracking down time criminals never ends. Who knows — someday you just might earn the right to have your name displayed in Acme's Hall of Fame.

addition to the illustrious series. The graphics, as usual, are excellent, the musical score is clever and topical, and the interface makes for lively play. Some may tire of the actual crime-solving routine after 15 or 20 cases, but the challenge of sifting through the historical esoterica should keep most players on the trail of the illusive Carmen for a long time.

GP

Hardware requirements: 640K minimum memory for VGA/MCGA graphics, 512K for EGA, CGA, Hercules, and Tandy 16-color graphics; hard disk required; supports all major sound boards; mouse or joystick optional.

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ALTERNATE LIVES

NEIL RANDALL

ULTIMATELY, MARS



Our hero exits the space capsule's hatch and steps into the cold Martian air. Be sure to take a coat — some oxium pellets will help, too.



igin's new Worlds of Ultima series, of which *Martian Dreams* is the second entry, represents a new and interesting variation on the classic theme of the Ultima games, particularly *Ultima VI*. The first five games in the Ultima series were designed primarily for the Apple II system, as the primitive graphics of the PC versions make all too evident. With *Ultima VI*, Richard Garriott ("Lord British")

turned to a VGA-based PC for development, and the game changed. The graphics became far more sophisticated, and the Ultima system took on a much more state-of-the-art appearance. Some Apple II aficionados claimed — and still do — that game play suffered as a result; but there was no question in anyone's mind that the new look was here to stay.

Whereas most fantasy role-playing (FRP) systems generate

sequel upon sequel, the revamped Ultima system generated a spin-off in the form of the Worlds of Ultima series. Rather than quickly following *Ultima VI* with *Ultima VII* and *VIII*, Garriott and Origin decided to give the Ultima system a workout in other kinds of fictional worlds.

The initial result was *Savage Empire*, a romp, of sorts, through earth's prehistoric past. The newest addition is *Martian Dreams*, a fine piece of old-fashioned science fiction with the flavor of a Jules Verne or H.G. Wells story.

Martian Dreams is billed as another Orb of the Moon time-travel adventure, but that's really only a way of lending some (rather forced) consistency to the Ultima universe. You don't actually time-travel during the game, and you don't use Ultima's Orb of the Moon gate system. Instead, you start your adventure in the year 1895, aboard a space capsule in the southern hemisphere of the planet Mars. That's right, you're on Mars, and it's very red.



On the forbidding red surface of Mars, Trevison, Spector, and Nellie Bly encounter two plantelopes. Time for a fight, and not necessarily an easy one.



Here, Trevison talks with Dibbs, the officer in charge of the 1893 landing site. He has loads of clues to help in solving the adventure.

Here's what's happened. In 1893, it was announced that a spacecraft would be fired out of a large cannon aimed at Mars. Naturally, the event was the subject of great interest, and the launch attracted many of the Victorian era's most prominent citizens. These people were given a tour of the craft the day before its scheduled launch, and some mysterious person chose that precise moment to commit a heinous crime. While all of these important people were on board, the spacecraft was launched, and the flowers of Victorian citizenry were lost.

This is where you come in. Along with Sigmund Freud, journalist Nellie Bly, inventor Nikola Tesla, and physician C. L. Blood, you've been sent to Mars to rescue the 1893 expedition. Given that the earlier expedition included such stalwarts as actress Sarah Bernhardt, western heroes Buffalo Bill Cody and Calamity Jane, railroad magnate Andrew Carnegie, scientist and educator George Washington Carver, inventor Thomas Edison, publisher William Randolph Hearst, explorer Robert Peary, and political figures Nikolai Lenin, Theodore Roosevelt, and Gregori Rasputin, you've got some serious and important rescuing ahead of you.

Martian Dreams uses the same game system found in *Savage Empire*, a simplified version of the *Ultima VI* system. The left half of the screen features a mostly overhead view of the landscape your party is walking across. At the bottom of this portion is a series of

toggle switches, which you can click on to perform possible actions. The bottom right quarter of the screen contains a text display, which describes locations, reports conversations, and so on. At the top right is character information: You can see statistics about the party or the individual character, and it's from this area that you access each character's inventory.

You can use the mouse to perform almost all of the game's actions. Each of the action commands — Attack, Talk, Look, Get, Drop, Move, Use, and Combat — can be toggled by clicking on the command switches, and you can act on items and people by clicking first on the switch and then on the item or person. For instance, to move a pile of coal into a furnace (which, by the way, is an essential action in the game), you click on Use, then on the Shovel icon (in someone's inventory), then on the pile of coal (found in the main screen picture), and finally on the desired location. Similarly, to attack a creature, click on Attack and then on the picture of the creature.

You'll find yourself using the inventory displays over and over again. First, you must dress and arm each character, which means displaying the character's inventory, then clicking on the weapon you want. As long as the character has an empty hand, the weapon will be instantly readied (if you're using a gun, you must acquire bullets separately). To dress a character, click on the item of clothing; the character will be clothed instantly.

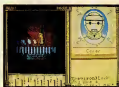
All of this is crucial to playing *Martian Dreams* — if you leave the space capsule without dressing the characters in heavy clothing (coats, scarves, gloves, etc.), they'll lose hit points as they start to freeze. If you forget to ready the proper weapons (or forget to change them in mid-battle), you'll find yourself with fist-fighters only. Furthermore, using the right tools for the right job is vital to your success, as you'll discover almost immediately.

Your first task is to talk with everyone aboard the space capsule. By doing so, you can acquire a pry bar to get the hatch open, and you'll also discover the coordinates used by the 1893 expedition. Find a sextant, which will give you a good reading on coordinates wherever you go, then head for the storage area at the capsule's rear. Dress, arm yourself, and head towards the 1893 site. There you'll pick up Dibbs, who will give you all kinds of useful information about finding your way around Mars.

After that, it's a matter of visiting the important locations, acquiring supplies, information, and a sense of what you must do. The largest puzzles lie in restoring power to the planet, a task that will keep you occupied for many hours. But one hint, and only one, because it's vital to your progress: Go to the outpost and take the blue berries, then learn how they affect the Move and Get commands.

If you're a fan of the *Ultima* game system, and you liked the storyline of *Savage Empire*, *Martian Dreams* will prove every bit as engrossing. With a 12-MHz machine and VGA display, movement sometimes slows to a crawl — a fact that makes you a bit reluctant to travel around — but aside from that, the system works very well. The sound and music are excellent (Roland, Ad Lib, and Sound Blaster boards supported). *Martian Dreams* is good stuff, and Mars is not a bad planet on which to spend your game time.

GP



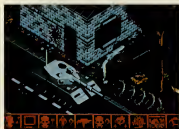
Coker is a robot, and he's highly knowledgeable about the power system on Mars. If you need more information, look around and read the scrolls.



THE DESKTOP GENERAL

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

SALVOS FROM THE SUMMER CES



Twilight 2000, a British import from MicroPlay, is a fine-looking post-apocalypse war game.

When I sat down exactly one year ago to write the roundup from the 1990 Summer Consumer Electronics Show, the future of PC gaming in general did not appear to be robust. Business was off, the popularity of videogames was forcing many PC software publishers to divert their energies, and several once vital and creative game companies had either folded their tents or cut their activities to the bone.

This year, however, saw far more excitement in the PC wing of the CES than almost anywhere else in the show (a sluggish one, with attendance off 40 percent from last June's event). The big news in the videogame area — the much-ballyhooed debut of the Super Nintendo 16-bit machine — was generally greeted with a collective yawn. And few of the videogames displayed (for either 8- or 16-bit machines) showed much in the way of originality or creativity, except (ahem) for the ones that were converted from classic PC games, such as Konami's slick-looking adaptation of *Pirates*.

By contrast, the PC area fairly exploded with exuberance. Everywhere you turned, designers were pushing the performance envelope in all directions: thunderous sound, drop-dead graphics, new ideas, fresh concepts, plot lines equal in their complexity and inventiveness to the average novel...all testifying to the solidity and superiority of the PC format as an electronic entertainment platform. (Of course, we suspect that the dropping prices for high-end hardware also played a role in this newfound optimism.)

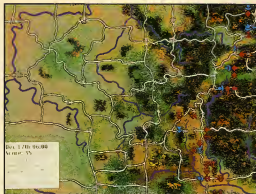
The war games genre mirrored all of this in microcosm. Several companies who have never bothered with war games before displayed their premiere offerings in the field. *Psygnosis*, a company known for the spectacular graphics of its arcade games, showed *Armour-Geddon*, an action-strategy game set in a post-holocaust environment. Game play looked exciting, but the graphics — curiously for this company — struck me as pedestrian, and the "spewing-triangle" explosions were

definitely retrograde.

Ubi Soft, an innovative French software company whose games are distributed here by Electronic Arts, will soon release *Battle Isle*, a hex-based strategy game fought over hundreds of islands, large and small. Games can last from 20 minutes to all day, depending on your mood and available time.

Another newcomer, Nanga Software, showed tantalizing snippets of *The Civil War*. We were impressed by the ambition, scope, and appearance of the game, and look forward to seeing more.

There were fewer Desert Storm-inspired games on view than one might have expected, but the Middle East was certainly not neglected. A most interesting program from Three-Sixty, entitled *Patriot*, will incorporate 20 scenarios, a game editor, and add-on Battleset modules. Sound like *Harpoon*? It should, since it's based on the same engine. Three-Sixty also promises *Patriot* will be easier for first-time gamers to get into than *Harpoon*, a thoughtful and welcome



Patton Strikes Back, from *Broderbund*, is Chris Crawford's epic recreation of Hitler's Ardennes offensive—it was one of the classiest looking war games on view at the show.

change which can only serve to broaden the game's appeal.

SSI, which is on a huge roll with the success of its fantasy role-playing titles, showed only one war game, *Conflict: Middle East*, a massively detailed recreation of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Ordinarily, I would have done handstands at the idea, but because SSI is basing this game on its lamentable *Red Lightning* system (a World War III simulation that I found plodding and dull), I think I'll reserve my enthusiasm until I see what, if anything, the company has done to liven things up.

MicroProse showed an interesting sequel to the highly original *Midwinter* strategy war game (*Midwinter* is reviewed elsewhere in this issue). Entitled *Flames of Freedom*, this game is set in a time after the end of the New Ice Age, and its battles are fought throughout a vast archipelago. Also on view was a snappy-looking post-apocalypse war-cum-role-playing game entitled *Twilight: 2000*, based on a long-running paper game of the same name.

Period war games were conspicuous by their absence, with one enticing exception: Koei's vast Napoleonic simulation, *L'Empereur*. Only the Nintendo version was at the show (PC and NES formats will be simultaneously released, probably in October), but I saw enough to indicate that Koei has done its usual masterful job of plunging you into the heart of a historical milieu.

Clearly the most interesting World War II program on display was Chris Crawford's epic recreation of Hitler's Ardennes offensive, *Patton Strikes Back*, due out soon from *Broderbund*. You can refight the actual Battle of the Bulge from either the German or Allied side, or you can soup things up with modified weather or units. This was one of the classiest looking war games on view at the show, and its simple, intuitive command system would seem to make it appealing for novice gamers as well as seasoned grognards.

Not actually on view, but much discussed nevertheless, was the forthcoming follow-up to *Red Baron* which Dynamix hopes to have on the market by Christmas. If you've ever wondered why nobody has done a good simulation of the Zero fighter, wonder no more! A conversation with *Red Baron*'s gifted designer, Damon Slye,

revealed that *Aces of the Pacific* will include not only the warplanes you'd expect (Zeros, Hellcats, Corsairs, and P-38s), but also some interesting, less common types: Wildcats, Kates, Vals, and Tonys, for example. Anti-shipping strikes and torpedo attacks will play a big part in the game, which will include a massive Battle of Midway scenario. This one should be hot.

Also announced, but not shown, was *Utah Beach* from *Interstel*, purported to be the first in a series of famous World War II battle simulations. One intriguing feature of *Utah Beach* is that it allows the player to refight the siege of Cherbourg in some detail. Given *Interstel*'s track record, this could be a sleeper. (Now, guys, when are we going to get *Empire II*?)

High-flying simulations were not as much in evidence this time as at the previous two shows. So many good ones have been produced recently that the companies who specialize in them probably need to catch their collective breath. Of those that were being shown, the most exciting were two upgrades of existing software: MicroProse's *F-117-A Stealth Fighter 2.0* and Dynamix's *A-10 Tank Killer: Version 1.5*. The MicroProse upgrade has sensational graphics and, naturally, a bunch of new Mideast scenarios, while the Dynamix program features new flight models (i.e., it's easier to fly the plane this time, thank heavens!), new weapons, and new battles (guess where?).

All things considered, war gamers can look forward to an abundance of good product between now and Christmas.



MicroProse upgrade, *F-117-A Stealth Fighter 2.0*, features sensational graphics and, not surprisingly, a variety of new Mideast scenarios.

GP



VIRTUAL REALITY

ARLAN LEVITAN

ONE STEP CLOSER TO REALITY

It was another typical Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, and your humble editorial staff had things all worked out. Instead of each of us simply reviewing a game for this issue, Bill Trotter and I would report on what we saw at the show that piqued our interest. William, seasoned general that he is, carried out his orders with the precision and panache of a Stormin' Norman.

Meanwhile, after yawning through demos of a half dozen assorted new flight simulators, your humble virtual servant decided to take in a personal simulation of Ferris Levitan's *Day Off*.

Nestled in a city block where real estate values rival those of midtown Manhattan or San Francisco lies the McClurg Court Theater, home of the only 70mm widescreen movie house in Chicago proper. Nothing at CES had been able to grab me, but Sunday afternoon's screening of *Backdraft* seized me like a pit bull and refused to let go.

The theater's 150-foot screen literally wrapped around me, claiming both my direct and peripheral vision. Wider-than-life images of raging infernos seared my retinas and LucasLab's THX sound

system became cosmically linked to the tympanic membranes of my ears. The noise of crackling infernos, splintering wood, and thermal explosions ran through my nervous system like a runaway train.

I left the theater knowing what was missing from many of these simulations I've tried over

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the last year — the vast, various sights and sounds of real life. I want computer-based simulations that can bridge the chasm that separates machine simulations from reality.

Sound isn't the problem, although the quality and capabilities of today's Sound Blaster, Ad Lib, and other compatible sound cards can hardly be considered state of the art. Even the newest "premium" sound cards leave a lot to be desired in my finicky book. For the well-heeled who demand the ultimate in audio performance, the hot ticket for the 1990s may well turn out to be Turtle Beach's new MultiSound board.

Although MultiSound is primarily intended for use as a system for PC multimedia developers, Activision, Sierra, and Dynamix have expressed more than a passing interest in the board's capabilities. Besides a Motorola Digital Sound Processor record/playback system, a 32-voice Emu Proteus chip set with over four megabytes of pristine 16-bit sampled sounds and instruments is built into MultiSound. How much better is the sound? We're talking the difference between a Cavalier station wagon and a Corvette ZR-1. (In case you're interested, we're also talking about a thousand bucks.)

Display systems represent much more of a challenge. VGA and MCGA graphics are looking rather long of tooth lately, and IBM's XGA doesn't cut the

mustard either (even the funky bright yellow stuff). For forceful simulations, we need display systems and interfaces that are far more engaging than today's crop. The good news is that the tip of the iceberg for future simulation display technology has recently come into distant view.

Last March in the U.K., W Industries Limited rolled out its Virtuality 1000SD system for commercial arcades. With an affordable price of only \$30,000 per player, each 1000SD has more hardware than your local Tru-Value store. The mundane tasks of sound control and data management are handled by an off-the-shelf Amiga 3000. Sound and image generation and motion control are the province of a custom multi-processor system dubbed Expality, which incorporates four high-end microprocessors and a 33 MHz Motorola 68040 with multiple 68882 math co-processors. For multi-player simulations, participants can be linked using the system's built-in Ethernet local area network support.

The 1000SD's Visette helmet interface is where the silicon rubber meets the virtual road. The helmet contains a stereoscopic liquid crystal display system with a wide field of view, a four-channel sound system, and integrated motion sensors that allow the system to continuously track head position and angle. According to Richard Holmes, Director of Design and Production at W Industries', the Virtuality system can produce simulations with animation rates of 17 to 25 frames per second.

For roughly \$20,000 more than you'd spend for the 1000SD, you can spring for VPL Research's Reality Built for Two. Based on an Apple Macintosh IIx workstation, RBT is the brainchild of virtual reality guru Jaron Lanier. Taking a waltz through RBT's simulated cartoon-like worlds require donning a set of "Eyephone" goggles with a pair of built-in color LCD displays and stereo headphones. Put on your sensor glove, slip into a stylish, wired jumpsuit, and you're ready to step out in virtual style.

While interested in the total immersion that such systems offer, most simulation software developers are a bit hesitant about jumping on the virtual reality bandwagon. After about an hour or so, many virtual travelers experience a phenomenon known as "simulator sickness." Nausea, disorientation, and mild panic attacks may be risks that researchers are willing to take, but the legal departments of software houses are less than thrilled with the prospect of real-life lawsuits.

A less risky course for simulations to take may be along the lines afforded by 3-D projection systems such as Texas Instrument's Omniview

**By the time 2001
rolls around,
a complete
virtual reality
entertainment
system will cost
no more than
what you'd pay
now for a
medium-priced
computer.**

imaging system. First publicly demonstrated at SigGraph '90, Omniview consists of a two-foot plastic dome under which a semi-opaque disc rotates at high speed. Computer-controlled lasers draw figures on the rotating disc so swiftly that the figures appear to float in space. Omniview objects can be up to 4 x 4 x 4 inches, and can be viewed from any position around (or even above) the projection area. By dedicating one laser per projected element, multiple, independent objects can be produced and manipulated.

A prototype of Dimension Technologies DTI 100M display was also shown at Siggraph '90. The 100M is a flat panel display that's around

fourteen inches square and two and a half inches deep. With a resolution of 640 x 480 pixels (sound familiar?) and 16 levels of gray, the device can produce the illusion of up to six inches of depth using LCD panels as louvered aperture grids over an intensely illuminated backplate.

Although we're likely to be well on our way into the next century before we all have crude holodecks in our homes or drive over to Recall, Inc. to take a simulated vacation, the first personal virtual reality systems for home use are probably less than a dozen years away.

W Industries and VPL's virtual reality systems may seem ludicrously impractical for personal use, but future systems are bound to be eminently affordable. Modest advances in extremely large scale integration (ELSI) and the development of virtual reality ASIC (application specific integrated circuits) will reduce the bulk of the required hardware to a manageable level. A 30 percent decline per year in electronics costs over the next decade will bring the cost of the basic add-on hardware to well under \$500. By the time 2001 rolls around, a complete virtual reality entertainment system will cost no more than what you'd pay now for a medium-priced consumer microcomputer.

No high-tech toy store of today would be caught dead without a reclining chair featuring built-in massage, vibrators, and stereo system. Toss in an RS-232 interface, modify the massager's hydraulics a bit, slip on your LCD headset, and you've got a perfectly acceptable command console for jumping into simulations that will make today's offerings pale in comparison. Just remember to beam over to the local pharmacy and stock up on Simuline if you're the queuey type.

GP

BREACH 2

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

The original *Breach* was published in 1987 as an offshoot of Omnitrend's successful *Universe 2*, which featured a lot of boarding battles involving space marines. *Breach* combined a sophisticated squad-level combat simulation with a dash of sci-fi role-playing adventure (the whole package is reminiscent of the *Aliens* movie). Although the game was somewhat awkward to play (no diagonal moves were allowed, for instance), it became a cult favorite, spawning fanzines and dozens of user-developed supplementary battle scenarios.

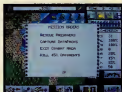
Breach 2, the much-anticipated sequel, is not exactly a new game: Omnitrend originally released it in the spring of 1990. Distribution problems kept it from finding its market, however, so Omnitrend joined forces with Mindcraft, under whose logo the game now appears, this time with ample distribution and support.

In both games, the player assumes the role of a squad leader of space marines, em-

broiled in a tough series of battles against a highly intelligent and well-armed enemy allied with various beasts and alien life forms. After each successful battle, your squad leader's abilities and experience level increase in the classic role-playing manner.

In the original *Breach*, the only way to resurrect a dead squad leader — even one in whom you might have invested many hours of intense game play — was to make your own backups; in other words, if the guy died, he vanished from the program, along with all of his accumulated talents and experience points. Fortunately, this time around, the squad leader's advancements are permanently recorded, so that if he dies in his sixth battle, you can refeit it immediately with all the abilities he had gained from his first five combats.

There is a great variety of interesting weapons and accessories available to your marines: neutron bombs that wipe out enemy life forms without damaging structures



Breach 2 comes with a wide variety of missions, some requiring stealth, and some requiring firepower. Most of them, sooner or later, have a lot of bang-bang.

(important in some missions), lightweight armor that makes the wearer almost invisible (a la *Predator*), and proximity charges that can be emplaced like Claymore mines to protect your flanks or provide a nasty surprise for any enemy troops trying to sneak up on you.

An equally wide variety of missions is included — some require lots of firepower, some require cunning and stealth. Supplementary mission disks are available, and the Mission Builder program included with the package allows you to create custom battles or modify existing scenarios.

Perhaps the most interesting feature, however, is the introduction of the "interlocking game systems" concept being created around *Breach 2*. In the months ahead, when Mindcraft releases its mammoth game of tactical space combat, *Rules of Engagement*, players will be able to insert *Breach 2* into the context of much larger campaigns. Thus, when a planetary invasion or a boarding attack occurs in *Rules of Engagement*, game play automatically segues into the *Breach 2* combat program.

While the graphics have a pleasantly old-fashioned look, harkening back to a simpler era in computer gaming, they are certainly colorful and thoroughly adequate for most as-



The scenario-builder allows you to design new battles or modify existing ones, and is pleasantly easy to use.



Send scouts out ahead, and don't neglect security on your flanks.

pects of game play. Some of the sound effects are delightful, and include lots of dandy ray-gun noises and hissing, growling, alien critters (our favorites are the pestiferous but seldom lethal "wadgels," blue-skinned varmints that shoot poisoned quills and are sometimes annoyingly hard to kill).

Some words of caution, however, are in order when it comes to the interface. The first three mice we tried to use on *Breach 2* either did not work at all or — most aggravatingly — worked only some of the time, and unpredictably at that. A quick call to Omnitrend revealed that, yes, there were problems with early-model mice, and if we installed a recent model mouse, the problem should be corrected. We did, and it wasn't.

In fact, the only time we could get the program to run properly with a mouse was when we used a fast 386 computer with a six-month-old mouse. Based on our experience, then, we recommend that consumers with slower, older computers and mice just sign

themselves to using keyboard controls — which, until the learning curve kicks in, is about as graceful as trying to write sonnets with a chisel.

Once your fingers get used to the multitude of keyboard moves, *Breach 2* plays decently enough, and becomes, in fact, a compelling game of tactical combat. One reason the antediluvian keyboard interface works is because the battles tend to unfold slowly and deliberately, giving you ample time to ponder your squad's maneuvers and tactics, and mull over which keystroke to use in a given situation. Most battles form a kind of crescendo, starting off slowly and methodically, and building in intensity and violence until you either win or lose.

Your troopers each have different skills. It's usually wise to send out scouts or infiltrators first, since they have the best chance of avoiding detection and are usually crack marksmen. In the beginning, when your squad leader's experience and accuracy are low, you're probably better off leaving him

in reserve until the battle reaches its climax.

When a wounded soldier's health becomes critically low, you can use a portable medical kit and revive him so that he's almost as good as new. Just don't wait until his vital signs are critical, because the same stimulus that shocks the system into recovery can also kill a man who's too far gone. Exactly when to administer medical packs is a judgment call — one of many decisions a squad leader has to make.

One especially realistic touch is the nasty damage your squad can take from misuse of its own weapons. For example, if a marine pitches a grenade and there is not enough room for it to clear the wall he's hiding behind, the grenade will bounce back and explode in his face, probably killing him. Similarly, if a marine fires a rocket launcher and the missile hits a nearby fuel tank, he'd better be at least three squares away from the resultant blast.

Breach 2 can be recommended to sci-fi fans and to conventional war gamers (if they don't mind battling wadgels along with more ordinary opponents). It's one of those games that has instant appeal to a fairly large, ready-made audience of game players, many of whom probably managed to acquire *Breach 2* months ago. With Mindcraft now distributing the product, it wouldn't be surprising to see a multitude of new *Breach* converts on the horizon.



Alien beasties will often attack as soon as you open the door to your base. Try not to waste grenades on them.

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; CGA, EGA, VGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; mouse optional; supports sound boards.

GP

HOVERFORCE

GARY MEREDITH

By the middle of the twenty-first century, the streets are in the hands of the crime lords. Biotech mutations known as Alterants control all criminal activities in huge MetaCity, including, most importantly, the distribution of the drug Aftershock. This pharmacological nightmare induces a state officially known as "neosteroidal rage," which turns humans into vicious, mindless killers. Lord Darkenill, ring-leader of this new "industry" and himself an Alterant, has carved up MetaCity into quadrants overseen by him and his three lieutenants. His quadrant, the Red Zone, is where all the Aftershock is manufactured.

In *Hoverforce*, from Accolade, you're a member of the city's elite Red Wasp Unit, which has been given the task of tracking down the drug shipments and destroying the Alterants. To give you an edge on the criminals, you're equipped with the latest in urban assault hovercraft, the

HoverKill 1000.

This baby is fast and maneuverable, and can be outfitted with a wide array of weaponry, armor, and propulsion upgrades. As you interdict the Aftershock shipments, you'll be credited with cash, which you use to buy the upgrades necessary for the tougher enemies on higher levels. The unmodified HoverKill 1000 is pretty potent, but you're going to need the very best in firepower and protection to take on Lord Darkenill.

You begin battling in the Blue Quadrant, the turf of Johnny Psyclops. The best piece of advice you can take with you into any quadrant is to fire at everything that moves. You're in this by yourself, so you can bet that anyone else you see is a bad guy.

When you destroy a drug ship (there are several different types, each with its own abilities and weaknesses), either a drug canister or money will appear. You need to collect both: the money for improve-



The flying saucers are usually the most numerous members of a drug lord's fleet. They're fairly maneuverable, but won't take nearly as much punishment as a bodyguard saucer or a cruiser.

ments and repairs on your hovercraft, and the canisters for evidence. You must collect a specified number of canisters (which varies with each drug run) before you can take on the drug lord for that quadrant. And you must defeat each drug lord three times (despite their drug dependency, these are pretty tough guys) before you can move on to the next level.

Hoverforce is a game that demands good reflexes and sound strategy. While it's simple enough just to fly around each quadrant, blasting away at whatever moves, you'll soon discover that this is a very inefficient way of proceeding. Each interdiction mission you attempt has a time limit, and a berserk "loose cannon" approach doesn't insure that you'll pick up the evidence and cash you need to take on the drug lord. Fortunately, when you do have to replay a mission (and chances are you'll replay many), you have the advantage of knowing where the drug lord and his minions will be.

The game doesn't randomly generate game scenarios, a fact you can use to your advantage. If there's a cluster of Alterants in the northeast sector of a quadrant during a particular mission, for example, they'll be there every time you replay the mission. You have a similar advantage at the end of each interdiction mission, when you've picked up all the drug canisters and just need to terminate the drug



The HoverKill 1000 is one mean machine, but it's no better than its pilot. Stopping Aftershock runs calls for quick reflexes and a well-developed strategy.

lord. All drug runs occur at night, so when daybreak arrives, the drug lord slips into a convenient building. All you have to do is wait for evening and he'll pop out of the same building—and, hopefully, right into your line of fire.

Although you start out with only a machine gun, you can buy more weapons to expand your arsenal, so a good deal of your strategy depends on the type of weapon you select. The short range of the machine gun requires that you do most of your fighting close to the enemy if you hope to inflict any real damage. On the other hand, a cannon, great for long distance bombardment, is worthless at close quarters. Missiles, expensive though they are, allow you the flexibility of stand-off or close-range fighting.

The careful choice of equipment for your craft is indeed a critical part of *Hoverforce*. On your first few missions, you won't have much money, so it's important to spend what you do have wisely. The first step is finding a store, which isn't too difficult if you use the tracker screen in your craft. (If this screen becomes damaged, you can always find a store by looking for buildings surrounded by shadows).

Once inside a store, you're



Each store is divided into three sections. Head for the armor and electronics section if you need to fortify your shielding or replace damaged radar and mapping modules.



At last — you've picked up all the drug canisters you need for evidence. Now it's time to get the despicable Alternant druglord in your sight and terminate.

presented with three types of equipment — armor (along with radar and other electronic devices), weaponry, and propulsion. Don't worry about upgrading your propulsion early on — the hovercraft is more than fast enough to catch all the ships you encounter in the first few drug runs. You should split your spending between the best armor you can afford and at least a minimum improvement in your weapon. You'll be amazed at the difference a minor gun or cannon improvement can make in your kill rate.

You also need to familiarize yourself with your cockpit readouts. The information from the radar and mapping features is invaluable, and helps you avoid wasting precious time. The directional display is especially important, since it not only indicates the location of stores, but also pinpoints the drug lord's position during runs.

Hoverforce is an amazingly smooth game that gives you the sensation of racing down city streets only a few inches above the ground. Usually, a simulator/arcade game such as *Hoverforce* only shows its best moves on a relatively fast 286

or 386 computer. Incredibly, the game is just as smooth on a slow 286, and can even be played enjoyably on a fast XT machine with the proper graphics. A big surprise is that the game plays better when you use a mouse rather than a joystick. The control interface is so sensitive that only a slight movement of the mouse produces very quick turns.

Very few computer arcade games or simulators have ever approached the realistic feeling of *Hoverforce*. The graphics are excellent, both in game screens and in the subsidiary screens. The sound, especially when you fire your weapons, is great when sent through one of the supported sound boards. *Accolade* has done its homework on this game, making *Hoverforce* the standard by which other simulator/arcade games should be judged.

GP

Hardware requirements: 640K minimum memory for VGA, MCGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; 512K for EGA and CGA graphics; hard disk recommended; Ad Lib and Soundblaster boards supported; supports mouse and joystick.

MIDWINTER

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

When *Midwinter* first arrived in our offices for review, we played it compulsively for hours at a time. Clearly, it was one of the freshest and most unusual strategy war games to come on the market in many years.

Developed for MicroPlay by Maelstrom Software of the U.K., *Midwinter* was conceived as an Atari ST game, and in that format it has sold many thousands of copies on the European market. As ported over for the PC, the graphics are distinctively different from those found in most IBM-compatible games, but they are nevertheless first-rate.

So too is the concept behind the game. *Midwinter* is set in the year 2099 A.D., during a new Ice Age that was set off when a giant meteorite collided with the Earth decades earlier. Fully half of the rather massive documentation, in fact, consists of a fairly technical scientific monograph explaining the basic premise detailing the climatic and social changes such a catastrophe could wreak on the ecosystem and on human culture. Although many game players will find their eyes glazing over during some of the more jargon-laden passages, you should at least skim these pages, for they make the game frighteningly plausible.

When the game begins, *Midwinter* Isle is the only place on earth where an organized society has managed to flourish. Here, a scattered confederation of human settlements called the Free Villages has managed to tap geothermal power sources and regenerate the rudiments of industry and culture. Lacking any organized external enemies (the situation elsewhere on Earth is apparently desperate in the extreme), the Mid-

winter settlements have been at peace for many years. Their only armed forces are a handful of constables that compose the Free Villages Peace Force.

But now, the Free Villages face an invasion by a murderous megalomaniac calling himself General Masters. Masters's mechanized columns, consisting of missile-armed snow buggies, supply sleds, and command vehicles, are fanning out aggressively and have caught the disorganized Peace Force totally by surprise.

At this point, the game player steps into the role of Captain John Stark, commander of the Peace Force. Things start with a bang: Stark finds himself suddenly under attack by a swarm of enemy vehicles in a remote location far from any other villages. If Stark can fight his way out of this first encounter, he must hurriedly contact as many other *Midwinter* settlers as he can, both peace officers and civilians, in an attempt to organize resistance to the invaders.



Church towers in settlements make excellent vantage points for snipers.

Stark and the other characters that come under your control can travel by hang glider, snowmobile, or skis. You must improvise military tactics with whatever is at hand, depending on who or what is available at various locations. Snow buggies can carry missiles, for instance, and should be used as mobile strike units. Small missiles can even be mounted on hang gliders, which — after a lot of practice — can be used as tactical air support.

Sabotage missions behind enemy lines can cut off fuel and supplies, delaying the enemies' columns. Scorched-earth tactics (that is, blowing up everything



Plan your moves on this strategic map, which shows both personnel and resources, such as bunkers, garages, and heat mines.

useful in the enemy's path) can slow Masters even more—but such desperate measures obviously damage the settlements' powers of resistance as much as they hamper the advancing enemy. Sniper attacks against command and supply vehicles are particularly effective.

As Stark, you can recruit up to 32 characters. Each has his or her own personal quirks, affinities, and animosities; some people work well with each other, while others loathe one another and are virtually useless until matched with a more compatible character. Organizing and managing your human resources, in fact, is even more of a challenge than making optimal use of your firepower—which is rather considerable, even though the weapons you use are scattered all over the landscape.

Much of the action takes place from a first-person, eye-view perspective as the characters ski, drive, or hang glide over the craggy, snow-covered landscape. The fractal-generated, light-source graphics, a symphonic kaleidoscope of whites, blues, and shadowy grays, are striking. Few computer games can equal the landscape effects *Midwinter* shows you when you're hang gliding at 7,000 feet and looking down at a 45-degree angle—it's breathtaking.

Midwinter is a game of vast dimensions, with a playing area of 160,000 square miles. And it has a powerful appeal to any game player who's ever entertained fantasies of becoming an intrepid guerilla leader ("Lawrence of Greenland" maybe?). The need to devise unorthodox tactics opens up virtually limitless tactical and strategic possibilities.

For the moment, though,

let's put all the praise aside. As we played game after game, and always lost the war at about the same point, a sense of frustration set in that eventually could not be offset by the game's considerable merits.

First of all, *Midwinter* is very difficult to win. Every one of the 30 or more games we played began with Stark so far from any possible recruits, and the invaders' columns tearing across the landscape so quickly, that by the time Stark had managed to enlist two or three volunteers, Masters had already overrun three-fourths of the island. (When Masters captures all the geothermal heat mines, he wins.)

Despite the fact that there is a "companion" icon that lets you join compatible persons into one party, it's not possible to move them as one party unless they're in a vehicle. Nor, despite trying everything we could think of, could we ever figure out a way to get these rugged individualists to fight or maneuver together as organized units. The games always wound down to a losing conclusion with a dozen or so exhausted, dispirited individuals skiing or bugging over remote parts of the landscape, bushwhacking enemy units when they could—sometimes even doing a lot of damage—but never acting in concert, or according to a coherent tactical plan.

Unrealistically, the game also does not allow you to recapture vital installations from the enemy—all you can do is blow them up. In the case of factories and heat mines, this hurts your side as much, or worse, than it does the enemy.

Inquiries to the game's designers, however, revealed that there is a winning strategy

(provided you're lucky enough to begin at one of the 24 random starting locations that's close to a garage). Recruit the fastest skiers you can find (Adams and Caygill, for example), get them and everyone they can recruit into buggies, then form a defensive line around a cluster of heat mines (the northwest corner of the island is a good spot). Although you cannot get the characters



Much of *Midwinter*'s action is from the first-person view; moving over the rugged arctic landscape is often exhilarating.

to fight as a unit, you can engage the enemy sequentially and, with a little luck, hold out until you're strong enough to counterattack. While we haven't won the game yet, we're getting a lot closer by using this strategy.

Players who are looking for something strikingly different in the way of war games, and who can handle an extremely high level of frustration, should definitely give *Midwinter* a try. It's unique, and often startlingly beautiful.

GP

Hardware requirements: 640K minimum memory; MCGA, VGA, EGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; supports Roland and Ad Lib sound cards; joystick and mouse recommended.

TEAM YANKEE

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

There probably isn't the remotest chance now of a Warsaw Pact invasion of Germany — the classic World War III scenario — but that hardly invalidates a hypothetical showdown between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces as a fit subject for war games. The contrast between the Eastern Bloc's superior numbers and NATO's technological edge naturally leads to plenty of "what ifs" and might-have-beens. These scenarios still lend themselves to war gaming as well as ever — perhaps even more so now that much of that technology has been tested in combat in the Persian Gulf.

Team Yankee — a British simulation imported to these shores by ReadySoft — would at first glance seem like an exciting addition to this

cluttered screen I've seen in ages.") But this first impression turned out to be unfair. Given the game's design goals and the complex, rapidly evolving nature of modern armored battles, the command and control system of *Team Yankee* is actually rather elegant and clever. True, there's an extensive amount of documentation to digest, but once you have a clear understanding of what's what, the interface works rather well, enabling you to jump from unit to unit, from map to turret-view, in a split second.

Practice is the key, and a few turns around the training course will help immeasurably. This is one simulation that definitely demands a mouse — although other modes of control are possible, it's inconceivable that any rational person would attempt this game with a joystick or a keyboard for very long.

There are five battles and five levels of difficulty, which sounds like enough to keep dedicated tank buffs spinning their tracks for many hours. It

would seem more desirable, however, to have more and different kinds of battles than to simply up the velocity and threat-level of the five basic encounters. The lack of variety is probably due to the fact that the entire simulation has been crammed onto a single 5.25" disk. Whatever the reasons for that, the compromises engendered by that limitation seem to work against the game's good intentions in other ways as well.

Graphics are adequate, but certainly nothing special. Only 16 colors are used in the game's VGA mode, and the three-dimensional effects are poky and sometimes downright disconcerting. There are a lot of forests in the game, for instance, and — as any student of elementary armored tactics knows — one of the best places to position tanks in a defensive engagement is at the edge of a wooded area, where they can see and fire without being easily detected. In this game, however, there's no "edge" to the tree line; the screen is either cov-



On the briefing screen, you'll see the basic battle plan before each engagement starts.

genre. It is based closely on the bestseller of the same name by Harold Coyle, a book distinguished for its authenticity (if not for its stick-in-the-mud prose).

In these tactical scenarios, the game player commands four armored platoons, consisting of M1-Abrams tanks, armored personnel carriers, Bradley vehicles, and a couple of self-propelled TOW launchers. By dividing one of the main screens into quadrants, the designers have made it possible for you to control, more or less simultaneously, the movements and actions of all four platoons.

At first glance, the "quadrant mode screen" looks impossibly complicated. (One editor declared it "the most



The "quadrant mode" screen looks impossibly cluttered but is actually quite efficient, once you get the hang of it.



Here's what a direct hit looks like—every time. If you put a round into the church behind the tank, though, you won't even see a flash.

ered with trees or it isn't. You can only estimate, from the map screen, where your optimum position ought to be, but we could discern no visible difference between being 1,000 yards into the woods and right up on the tree line. The Russian tanks, however, didn't seem to suffer from this handicap—they were able to sit invisibly behind a screen of evergreens, relentlessly picking us off from long range, while we were unable to return the compliment.

The dramatic painting on the box shows an Abrams operating with lots of air support—A-10s and Apaches—but at no time during the game do you actually get any help from the air. Before each scenario, you can designate a certain number of artillery barrages, selecting the time and place for the shells to land. But you *cannot* call for artillery support in the middle of a firefight—all you can do is guess, before the shooting starts, where the enemy might be at a given time. You can't actually see any results from those barrages, nor are you told what damage they inflicted. This little compromise in realism is both odd and frustrating.

If you shoot at a tree or a building, you don't even see an explosion, and when you shoot at a legitimate target, the explo-

sion is small and unsatisfying. There are no tracers, either for the big gun or the machine guns.

Half of one platoon is equipped with Bradleys, whose 25mm automatic cannon is devastatingly effective against lightly armored vehicles such as the Soviet BMP-2 and BTR-60—both of which you'll encounter frequently in these battles—but if you access that platoon, there is no icon for that weapon! You cannot shoot it! Once the Bradleys have fired their TOWs, they become about as useful as a pair of baby strollers. This is either an inexcusable lapse in design or just plain nonsense.

There's no doubting the good intentions behind *Team Yankee*, but all its purported concern for authenticity contrasts sharply with the gushy adolescent tone of the script. How, for instance, can you take a message like this seriously: "Team Bravo...has just been negated by a heavy barrage of Soviet infantry." (Have the Soviets finally perfected their deadly personnel catapults?)

And the British, for some unknown reason, remain obstinately fond of pointlessly complicated and twitchy copy-protection rituals. To play a game of *Team Yankee*, you must identify not one, not two, but

three vehicles (out of eight shown in the manual), and at least 20 percent of the time the system refused to "let us in" even though there was no possibility of error on our part.

To add insult to injury, the program crashed mightily right in the middle of one firefight—and this was a production copy, not a Beta version.

Team Yankee is ambitious, well-intentioned, and in some respects creatively and imaginatively designed. But all in all, it is too compromised by nagging technical flaws and irritating shortcuts.

That's not to say we didn't have a good enough time with some of it, when everything was working properly. And we'd like to give it another chance if and when some improvements are made.

As it stands now, however, we cannot recommend *Team Yankee*. For players interested in this type of simulation, the games of choice are still *MI Tank Platoon* (from MicroProse) for meticulously detailed authenticity, or, for sheer shoot-em-up excitement, *Accolade's Steel Thunder*.



Use the thermal imaging system to acquire targets at night and through smoke screens.

GP

Hardware requirements: 550K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; supports Ad Lib sound board; supports mouse or joystick (mouse highly recommended).

TIMEQUEST

STEPHEN POOLE

Since the appearance of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, the subject of time travel has been the basis of dozens and dozens of short stories, films, and novels, not to mention a few television shows. Why is time travel such a popular topic? Obviously, you don't have to be a historian to be enthralled with a certain place and time in the past; the idea of actually being able to see what life was like then is naturally intriguing.

But the real reason time travel is such a recurrent cultural motif is because humans love to speculate. For instance,

what if the collapse of the Roman empire had never taken place? How long would feudalism have prevailed if King John had not signed the

Magna Carta? Would the World War II Axis forces have been victorious had Hitler pressed forward and captured the British and French armies at Dunkirk? The urge to tweak historical variables appeals to the curiosity in almost everyone.

Herein lies the fascination of *Timequest*. In this impressive role-playing puzzle adventure from Legend Entertainment, however, you're not out to alter history. Rather, it's your responsibility to insure that certain historic events transpire as they originally did. The cost of failure: an altered and unrecognizable future, and your permanent imprisonment in the past.

The game begins in the year 2090 A.D. You are a private in the Temporal Corps, which was developed to control the

technology of temporal displacement — time travel. Although Temporal Corps agents journey into the future in order to determine how catastrophes and upheavals can be avoided, travel into the past is completely forbidden. The changes caused by an alteration of the past could snowball over the centuries, leading to massive disruptions of the timestream and the obliteration of history as we know it.

But the ban on travel into the past is effective only if Temporal Corps agents adhere to it, and Lieutenant Zeke Vettenmyer doesn't care too much for rules and regulations. In a fit of madness (seasoned by the aforementioned appeal of changing the course of history, perhaps?), Vettenmyer has commandeered a time-travel device, known as an Interkron, and headed out to alter ten critical events of the past.

You've been given the assignment of traveling to every time and place Vettenmyer

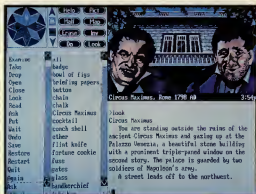
visited, determining what changes he has set in motion, then finding a way to reverse the effects of his meddling. At the start of the game, the only tools at your disposal are Vettenmyers's Interkron and a set of briefing papers outlining the events Vettenmyer has tried to alter. (Incidentally, all the information describing each of the critical events is historically accurate.)

At first you may be overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of your mission. In addition to the ten critical events he has altered, Vettenmyer also visited at least 35 other "timeplaces" — in all, there are 49 you can visit. To gather the items you need to solve the problems and to collect clues regarding Vettenmyer's whereabouts, you'll need to visit every possible destination. *Timequest* is, at its core, a detective mystery, so it's only fitting that you put in plenty of legwork.

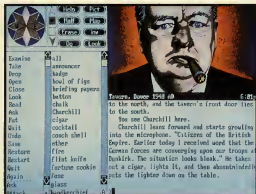
Timequest's EGA graphics are, in a word, amazing. The



You may not immediately understand why you should help this girl avoid enslavement, but remember that a good deed can pay off years later.



These two guards are determined to deny you an audience with Napoleon, but if you pay careful attention to the description of his headquarters, you may notice a way to "break" in.



Churchill would never dream of telling Hitler that England is prepared to surrender. You must somehow convince (or con) Churchill into uttering the code word that will lead Hitler to believe that English capitulation is at hand.

use of shading and contrast is outstanding, and the results that the artists have achieved using a 16-color palette are as good as the graphics found in many games using VGA. It really makes you wonder why EGA games of the past couldn't look this nice.

But make no mistake — *Timequest* is first and foremost a game of words, not pictures. Although the graphics (which occupy roughly a third of the screen) are colorful and evocative, their main purpose is to set the mood for the game, not visually provide you with every bit of information. Bob Bates, the author of *Timequest*, wrote text-based adventures for the now-defunct Infocom, and his roots are evident here. You may see a depiction of St. Peter's Basilica in the graphics window, for example, but the vendor hawking religious artifacts in front of the cathedral only appears in the text describing the scene.

Timequest can be played entirely with a mouse, but

pointing and clicking on objects and menu options actually constructs commands for the game's text parser. You can click or double-click in the graphics window to receive a description of a person or thing, take an action with an object, or greet characters. Menus of verbs, prepositions, and objects can be used to build any command, and you can move from scene to scene by clicking on a compass rose. (If you don't have a mouse, you can use a combination of keys to emulate the mouse interface.)

Of course, you can still type in any game command. But even if you find it faster to type in commands than scroll through the different menus, you should refer to the lists of verbs and nouns. If you're stuck on a difficult scene, a thorough review of the available objects and possible actions can often give you a hint to the solution. And if you build questions from the menus, you're shown every topic you can ask a character about — a crucial advantage

you don't get when typing in an inquiry.

If you have one of the several sound boards supported by *Timequest*, you'll hear an excellent sound track that adds depth to the different scenes. The RealSound effects — pounding hoofbeats, breaking glass, and trumpeting horns, to name a few — are also a treat. (There's nothing like the "scream" command to release frustration.)

The puzzles in *Timequest* vary greatly in difficulty. Saving Julius Caesar from an early demise should be a shoo-in for experienced problem-solvers, while helping the sultan Harun al-Rashid find out which of his wives is having an affair may vex even seasoned adventurers. Probably the game's most difficult puzzle comes after you've completed all ten assignments, and must locate Vettermyer's hideout. (Hint: You'll need to write down every message that Vettermyer has left behind.)

Timequest occupies a unique position in the genre of adventure gaming, masterfully blending satisfying graphics with the challenge of a classic text-based adventure. Players who don't enjoy picking written descriptions for clues and information probably won't enjoy *Timequest*. But if you love solving a mystery, and don't mind taking the time to carefully examine every strand of evidence, *Timequest* offers a rich, rewarding, and educational gaming experience.



Although you have the technology of time travel at your fingertips, it's not much help when you step into this sled with a perturbed King Arthur. Take a look at everything, but don't tarry too long — Arthur has no tolerance for "demons" that appear out of nowhere.

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA, MCGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy graphics; requires hard disk or two floppy disk drives; supports sound cards; supports mouse (highly recommended).

GP



The greatest hero for the Hyborean Age was a fierce barbarian born of the harsh northlands.

CONAN THE CIMMERIAN

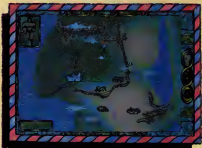
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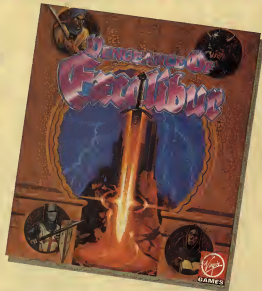
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ARACHNOPHOBIA

JEFF LUNDRIGAN

Help! The town of Canaima and the surrounding county have become infested with an especially poisonous and nasty breed of spider. Who can handle a situation like this? The professionals at McClintock Infestation Management (MIM), of course. Man-eating spiders? No problem: McClintock professionals have the tools and the know-how to get the job done.

In *Arachnophobia*, a Disney Software release based on last year's movie, you're an MIM exterminator who's been given the job of saving the residents of Canaima — and the rest of the world — from arachnid domination. You move from house to house in each town you visit, killing spiders until you locate and destroy the Queen. Your goal is to track down the granddaddy of them all, the South American Spider.



Drive from house to house to exterminate the eight-legged menace. When you kill all the spiders in a house, it's crossed off the map.

You'll depend most on Toxi-Max, the "insecticide with an environmental conscience." One shot of this stuff and those eight-legged beasts curl up for the big sleep. You also have a limited supply of bug bombs, which kill every spider in a room. You can also use your MIM regulation-issue boots to stomp spiders. Even your uniform provides protection — it takes four spider bites to kill a McClintock man.

A Queen's egg sac is located somewhere in each house, and you have to keep search-

ing until you find it. When you destroy an egg sac, the Queen screams commands to the soldier spiders. You can pick up her shrieks on your bugometer, a device which shows you what direction the sound came from. By eliminating sacs and following the bugometer, you track the Queen to her nest.

It takes multiple doses of Toxi-Max to kill a Queen, and a bug bomb only slows her down. You're better off constructing a flamethrower consisting of a spray can and matches, both of which you'll find in houses. But there are several catches: There's only one spray can in each town; if you have matches, the flamethrower is automatically assembled when you pick up the spray can; and you can only use a flamethrower in the house where it was assembled.

Because the house containing the Queen always has matches, you should avoid picking them up anywhere else for fear of constructing the flamethrower in the wrong house. This shifts the emphasis of the game: Instead of killing all the spiders in every single house, you figure out where the Queen is, then start looking for a spray can. Since you're awarded an extra bug bomb when you clear a house, it doesn't hurt to visit a few extra homes anyway. But it's not necessary for finding and killing the Queen.

Character response in *Arachnophobia* is sluggish, a problem common to many arcade-style PC games. On the



plus side, *Arachnophobia* supports the Disney-designed Sound Source, an add-on sound module, and this adds much to the game. A digitized voice keeps up a running commentary, shouting out things like, "The cavalry has arrived" and "Sit on a tuft!" There's also theme music from the movie, and lots of background noise — phones ring, dogs bark, doors creak — to give the game a nice touch of realism.

Without the Sound Source, however, the game is pretty thin (no other sound cards are supported). In fact, your interest can wane rather quickly even with the Sound Source. The spiders grow progressively faster and more aggressive, and the game becomes more difficult, but nothing really different happens. *Arachnophobia* is colorful and entertaining, but the enjoyment just doesn't last.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory (640K with Sound Source); VGA, MCGA, EGA, CGA, and Tandy-16 color graphics; joystick supported.

The flamethrower is a powerful weapon against the Queen, but you can't carry it between houses.

The man with
the hat is back.



This time he's
in over his head.

INDIANA JONES
and the
FATE of ATLANTIS

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BUSHBUCK CHARMS, VIKING SHIPS & DODO EGGS

GARY MEREDITH

REVIEWS

Much work has gone into preparation for Questival, the international scavenger hunt that brings together the world's best collectors. The consensus is that this year's hunt, in 2010 A.D., will be the most exciting one yet. Although you're ready for the challenge, you can't help but think that there's always the chance something could go wrong at the last minute. Sure enough, just as Questival is about to begin, word arrives that the nefarious Otto von Slinkenrat has made off with the treasures. He's scattered them all over the world, insuring that only he can retrieve them — to put in his own collection, of course.

In *Bushbuck Charms, Viking Ships & Dodo Eggs*, from PC Globe, it's up to you to thwart Otto's plans, while competing in the Questival against some of the toughest competition anywhere. You can play by yourself, against another human player, or against one of three computer opponents (one for each difficulty level). Should you find the courage to compete in the expert class, you'll put your

reputation on the line against Otto von Slinkenrat himself.

A game starts with each contestant being given a list of five items to retrieve. Most of these objects are quite esoteric, so you can forget about searching for things like a paving stone from the front walk of the Taj Mahal or the clapper from the Liberty Bell. Snakeskin shampoo, a podapoda tire, or an olive press are the stuff of this scavenger hunt, and the items become more arcane as the difficulty level increases. To make things more challenging, the clues are often as obscure as the articles you're searching for.

Depending on the level of difficulty, each contestant is given between 40 and 60 airline tickets to use in the search. Occasionally you'll find extra tickets, and you can earn bonus tickets for bringing back items in good condition. But you still must budget your tickets carefully, because there's always the possibility you'll have to retrace your steps. There's also the chance that you'll run into bad weather on a flight, which

could cause you to forfeit several tickets. And remember that an item can be damaged when carried through a storm, resulting in a deduction from your score when you present your find to the judges.

The basic strategy in *Bushbuck Charms, Viking Ships & Dodo Eggs* is to search for the most familiar object on your list, while trying to pick up clues for the

other items as the game progresses. Sometimes the items on your list are so obscure that you have no idea of their origins. In these cases, you'll have to devise search strategies based on language hints or historical time periods. A good desktop encyclopedia is a must for success.

If you think all this seems familiar, you're right. Broderbund, with its hugely successful Carmen Sandiego series, was unlikely to keep the educational adventure-game genre to itself forever, and *Bushbuck Charms, Viking Ships & Dodo Eggs* is an impressive entry into the field. The graphics aren't quite as nice as those in the latest adventures of Ms. Sandiego, but *Bushbuck Charms* sports an easy-to-use interface that gives the game a lot of appeal. Throw in a nice sense of humor, a very good soundtrack, and you have one of the best educational games we've seen to date.



The items you must retrieve aren't exactly of the everyday variety — you'll soon discover that some sort of reference book is a must.



The world's your oyster, although pearls probably won't be on your scavenging list. Because of the large number of possible destinations, game play is very open-ended.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA, MCGA, EGA, CGA graphics; Ad Lib sound board supported; mouse recommended.

CYBERGENIC RANGER

WAYNE KAWAMOTO

Years ago, the Lone Ranger captivated a generation of radio and television audiences. Now Symtus has taken the premise of an adventuring ranger, placed it in the distant future, and crowned it with blistering action and superb graphics.

In *Cybergenic Ranger* — *Secret of the Seventh Planet*, Micah Mason is an intergalactic avenger on a mission against evil. But don't look for his sidekick — Micah's been surgically enhanced with powerful weaponry and robotics, and is a one-man fighting machine.

The story of how Micah became the ranger of the game's title is really a combination of the legend of the Masked Man and the saga of Superman. (In further keeping with the comic-book flavor of the game, the instructions and story are presented in the form of — you guessed it — a comic book.)

Micah's parents were engineers who bravely colonized a distant planet. His father, a

brilliant scientist, constructed sophisticated droids that extracted minerals and ore from the planet, and all seemed to be

going well for the dauntless pioneers.

But then an alien race, the Regenerates, attacked the planet's colonies. In a last-ditch effort to save his young son's life, Micah's father loaded him into an escape pod and jettisoned it into space. After a frantic last communication, Micah's parents were never heard from again.

Later, Micah was discovered in the pod with critical injuries. To save his life, doctors surgically implanted robotic



Your arcade skills and hand-eye coordination will be tested in your battles against a varied assortment of hostile life forms.

components, and thus the Cybergenic Ranger was born.

As Micah grows up, he feels a pressing need to find out what happened to his parents. And he also wants to ensure that the Regenerates are not a threat to his home planet. That's where you take over Micah's fate.

Your journey takes you to the surface of a series of planets. Originally armed with lasers, you also find a variety of flying jets, bombs, and other devices to aid you in your fight against a bizarre assortment of creatures and monsters on widely differing planets. Your strategy is simple: If it moves, shoot it.

The 256-color graphics are breathtaking. The designers obviously took great care in producing these striking visuals, particularly the detailed, scrolling backgrounds. Each planet features distinct and creative environments, ranging from fiery infernos to frozen tundra.

The action here is first-rate. Using a joystick or the keyboard, you make Micah jump, duck, and fire at a relentless parade of hostile aliens. At times the animation is somewhat jerky, but your character remains quite responsive.

Players using joysticks may run into some problems, because there's no option for

joystick calibration. The joystick controls are more reliable, but the buttons are oddly positioned — you use the Enter key to jump and the space bar to fire a weapon. If you choose keyboard control, it's probably best to use the Enter key on the numeric keypad for jumping.

To deliver the varied and luscious graphics, *Cybergenic Ranger* requires lots of memory: almost five megabytes of hard drive space, and 640K of RAM. The game uses RealSound to deliver excellent sound effects (Ad Lib and Sound Blaster cards are also supported, but they only reproduce the RealSound effects).

Cybergenic Ranger will probably appeal to younger (teenaged) players, but it's easy to see how any arcade enthusiast could get hooked on this game's furious action and exquisite graphics. The storyline says Micah's parents are never heard from again, and that may well be the fate of the innocent player who discovers this game.



At the end of each level, you'll be challenged by a supercreature who stands between you and the secret of the seventh planet.

GP

Hardware requirements: 640K minimum memory; 10 MHz minimum clockspeed; VGA, MCGA, or EGA graphics; hard disk required; supports soundboards; joystick optional.

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Actual photos from the IBM/VGA version. Other versions may vary.

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LEMMINGS

SELBY BATEMAN

Every so often, a PC game comes along that offers a new twist, opens a previously unseen door, or turns a familiar concept on its head. For example, *Tetris* from Spectrum Holobyte is an almost too simple puzzle game that has become a universally popular success. Maxis Software's *Sim City* makes urban planning fascinating and fun, and at the same time teaches a tremendous amount about the balancing act we call urban civilization. *Lemmings* is such a groundbreaker — simple, charming, challenging, and decidedly different.

We've all grown up hearing the well-worn references to lemmings, those small arctic rodents whose migration patterns often send them off cliffs, into the ocean, or toward some other means of mass destruction. We may never know why lemmings are so obdurate when

it comes to their travel plans, but thanks to a new game from Psygnosis you have the chance to save untold num-bers of lemmings from their doom. At

first you'll play *Lemmings* because it's a lot of fun — and you'll keep playing because the little characters are so cute that you feel downright depressed if you let too many of them plod stupidly into oblivion.

There are four levels of difficulty — Fun, Tricky, Taxing, and Mayhem — each made up of thirty different rooms or areas into which varying numbers of lemmings drop. That's a full 120 puzzles to solve, so you're not about to finish this game off in one or two sittings.

As the hapless lemmings fall into each area, they immediately begin walking toward



The landscapes in *Lemmings* are colorful and fanciful, and almost always a challenge.

what will quickly be their demise — unless you leap into action and direct a few of their number to perform certain life-saving tasks.

With the click of a mouse or the press of a key, you can "teach" a lemming to block off a passageway, build a bridge, dig a hole, and so forth. You can even have a lemming blow itself up for the greater good (the poor critter sticks his fingers in his ears and explodes into multi-colored atoms). And, sad to say, there's even a "Nuke 'Em" option that's almost too painful to contemplate.

On some levels, you may have to get by with a restricted amount of options. Perhaps you'll only have five chances to create bridge builders in order to work your way out of a hole. Or maybe you will have multiple options that must be used in a particular order to succeed — dig, then build, then block, for example. The first 30 rooms give you lots of practice at using one or more of the actions that save their lives, so you can slowly work your way toward the upper levels, where things grow frantic indeed.

The areas into which the lemmings drop are quite varied and colorful, with fanciful

structures and multi-leveled platforms and walkways to navigate. If you have a sound board, you'll also appreciate a surprisingly rich background musical score that changes from level to level.

This is without doubt a unique and very special game environment, featuring multi-faceted puzzles imbued with subtlety and wit. The Psygnosis designers obviously have a keen sense of humor, and they've filled *Lemmings* with a charming sense of the absurd.

As noted earlier, this is a groundbreaking effort, and comes with the highest recommendation. But be forewarned. Make a simple mistake in guiding those tiny fellows, and you'll send luckless lemmings to an early grave. And you don't want that on your conscience.



Building stairways is one of the trickiest feats these lemmings can undertake.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory required; VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; AdLib and Sound Blaster sound boards supported; mouse and joystick supported (mouse highly recommended).

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MURDER!

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Police have today been informed of the murder of Mr Charles Innes, aged 46, an attorney from Bar-

ington, W. Sussex. It is believed Mr Innes was stabbed to death at the home of Mrs Audrey

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Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats, by quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.



NIGHTBREED

JEFF LUNDRIGAN

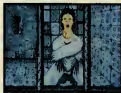
Most games based on movies have one of two problems: They either use a movie's name and characters as little more than a colorful background for an otherwise run-of-the-mill game, or they follow the movie's plot so closely that it interferes with playability and makes the game too predictable. Although *Nightbreed*, a new release from Ocean, manages to avoid both these traps, it has more than its share of other flaws.

Nightbreed (based on the Clive Barker movie of the same name) centers on Aaron Boone, an emotionally disturbed young man in the care of a psychiatrist named Decker. Boone suffers from blackouts and mild hallucinations, and therefore readily believes Decker's assertion that Boone is responsible for a series of vicious murders. Boone heads off into the night and eventually stumbles upon the *Nightbreed*, a race of monsters hiding out in a vast underground city called Midian. Decker, who is actually the killer, tracks Boone to Midian, bringing the police and a gang of gun-happy monster hunters who call themselves the "Sons of the Free."

The game's arcade sequences, which are linked by short storyboard segments, follow the action in the movie. The arcade scenes are all different, so you'll have to develop several skills over the course of the game. Ocean calls *Nightbreed* an "interactive movie," and that's an accurate description. You take the character of Boone, try to overcome the numerous obstacles he encounters, then watch events unfold until Boone is required to do something else.

Other games—*Wing Commander*, for instance, and many Cinemaware games—use this format, and in *Nightbreed* it works quite well. The graphics, while not top-of-the-line, are effective, but they do tend to get pretty gory. In fact, even the tamer scenes can often be a bit disturbing, but this suits the subject matter, and gives the game an appropriately dark and nightmarish atmosphere.

Where *Nightbreed* falters is in the arcade sequences, which unfortunately make up the bulk of the game. Although they're integrated into the storyline fairly well, they tend to be poorly executed, and at times become just plain tedious.



Although the graphics aren't the best you've ever seen, they can be pretty nightmarish, even startling at times.

In an early sequence, for instance, Boone is attacked by Pelquin, one of the more cannibalistic members of the *Nightbreed*, and has to flee for his life. The game switches to a head-on view of Boone running, with Pelquin in hot pursuit. To make Boone speed up and escape, you hit the joystick or mouse button in synch with his swinging arms. If you time it right, Boone runs faster and gets away.

As arcade action goes, this is different, but it's also not very interesting. You just keep tapping the button and wait for the sequence to end. Many of the game's segments are like this, requiring you simply to repeat an action for the duration of the scene. In some sections you have to rely a lot on trial and error, which can be extremely frustrating because of the lack of a save-game function. Make the wrong choice, and you're back to square one.

With a little more thought and work, *Nightbreed* could have been thoroughly enjoyable. As it stands, though, the interesting graphics aren't quite worth the repetition and frustration.

GP



You have to make this choice three times during the game. Save yourself some trouble—enter the graveyard first, look around, then enter the city of Midian.

Hardware Requirements: 640K minimum memory; VGA, MCGA, EGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; mouse or joystick recommended.

TROIKA

LESLIE MIZELL

Does an arcade game in which you blast alien spaceships sound familiar? How about a puzzle game where you connect sections of pipe by placing them over a grid, or another in which you must find your way out of a series of mazelike rooms?

All of these sound like games you've either played or heard about. Despite first impressions, *Troika*, from Paragon, is not a rehash of tired game themes. Soviet game designer Dima Pavlovsky has taken three familiar motifs and built such user-friendly games around them that even people who hate puzzle or arcade games will enjoy themselves.

For example, in "Rebel Planets," you pilot a spaceship and shoot missiles at alien spaceships, satellites, and creatures on three different planets. Although you get zapped back to the start of the game if you crash all your spaceships, that probably won't happen often. Why? Because "Rebel Planets" is chock-full of opportunities to pick up extra lives. You can win an extra life — sometimes more — on at least two-thirds of the screens.



Build a pipeline around the blue and green generators in "Metal Hearts," then send a bomb down the line to destroy your work.

In many arcade games, you never get to see the upper levels because you can't get past the first stages. Not so in "Rebel Planets." If you've got the patience, you can learn the passwords for the two upper planets, Telt and Heff, just by watching the demo game for Rita, the first planet. As long as you're playing on at least Fighter (medium) speed, you can use the passwords to skip to Telt and Heff.

Troika's second game, "Metal Hearts," is much like Lucasfilm's *Pipe Dream*. Blue and green generators are randomly placed on a 48-square grid. When pieces of pipe enter the grid from the corners of the screen, you place them so that

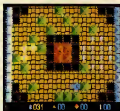
they connect to the generators. Once a pipeline is completed, you send a bomb into the line, which destroys the pipes and the generators.

Here again, many games of this kind would give you a paltry number of bombs per level, and the game would end if you used them up. But in "Metal Hearts" you have a quite generous supply of bombs. Even if the worst happens, you can use the stage-select option to return to the same room (although you lose any accumulated points).

In "Van's Time Machine," you guide a ro-tund little alien through a series of mazelike rooms, helping him advance by moving blocks or flipping tiles until he reaches the exit. Standing between two same-colored blocks or venturing too near a laser generator is fatal, but there aren't too many other ways to die.

As in "Rebel Planets," you can pick up pointers from the long demo. And if you're accidentally incinerated, you can begin that room again without losing any power boosters or money.

It's possible that die-hard arcade enthusiasts might find the graphically lackluster *Troika* somewhat dull. On the other hand, if you like playing arcade games but don't enjoy the accompanying frustration, *Troika* is for you.



Watch out for same-colored blocks in "Van's Time Machine." If you step between two green or two red squares, you'll be cooked to a crisp.



In "Rebel Planets" you shoot alien spaceships and creatures on three different planets.

GP

Hardware requirements:
640K minimum memory;
VGA or EGA graphics; mouse
and joystick optional;
supports Roland and Ad Lib
sound cards.

THEME PARK MYSTERY

GARY MEREDITH

Amusement parks are supposed to be full of people being amused. A sense of amusement, however, is the last thing you feel as you enter the gates of the Magic Canyon Theme Park. A previous visit to your uncle's park found the place teeming with visitors, a veritable beehive of activity. Now, the streets, the rides, and the arcades are dead—as dead as your uncle, who took his own life as he grappled with the madness that drove him into an asylum. He was the last person to investigate the mystery of Magic Canyon, but now you, too, risk your sanity and your life.

With that ominous little prologue, *Theme Park Mystery*, from Konami, takes you into a twisted world on a quest to discover the truth behind the evil doings at Magic Canyon. But things aren't totally gloomy. What you really have here is an



The monorail is your method of travel to all four lands in the Magic Canyon Theme Park. To ride it, you'll first have to get a pass from Zoltan.

entertaining collection of arcade games strung together with a decidedly sinister storyline. The basic premise of the game is that you visit the four warped worlds of the Magic Canyon Theme Park—Yesterdayland, Dragonland, Dreamland, and Futureland—to recover eight gremlins and return them to the mysterious clairvoyant Zoltan.

You first meet Zoltan in Yesterdayland, where he inhabits the fortune-telling slot machine. Once you unjam the machine's mechanism, Zoltan will give you some hints to get



Your ability to think outside logical norms will be tested in Dreamland. There are two gremlins and a monorail pass to Futureland you'll need to find here.

you started, as well as a pass for the Monorail of Fear. Although you don't have to play the adjacent bagatelle machine right away, it can be a source of coins and tokens which you may need later on in the game. The third slot machine in Yesterdayland, The Grabber, contains one of the gremlins you need to recover, but you're probably better off waiting until later to play it.

After you receive the monorail pass from Zoltan, you're off to Dragonland, where your first order of business should be to find the sleep potion that will take you to Dreamland. Unless you already have the Dreamland timer card, you won't be able to remain in Dreamland for long, but it's still a good idea to visit there and find out what you'll be up against. Back in Dragonland, you need to find the casket where the eight gremlins will eventually be held.

Once you're able to stay in Dreamland for an extended period, you'll discover the true nature of the place. Many things are not as they seem, and objects which might seem useless at first glance could prove extremely valuable when you pick them up. Dreamland is cast as a chessboard, and it's here that much of the mystery of Magic Canyon is revealed.

Futureland is where you'll find most of the gremlins (disguised as floating balls) and encounter the Rollercreeper, a coaster ride to end all coaster rides. It's important that you keep an eye on your shield strength while you're in Futureland, since you'll have a lot of enemy ships thrown at you once you hop aboard the Rollercreeper. Fortunately, you can replenish your shield by picking up the debris of destroyed ships.

The puzzles of *Theme Park Mystery* will keep you guessing, while the arcade sequences will test your reflexes to the max. This is an engrossing game, with graphics and a sense of humor that make for a refreshing change of pace.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA, MCGA, EGA, CGA, and Tandy 16-color graphics; joystick or mouse recommended.

Dozens and dozens of exciting new PC games and related products were announced at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show (CES) held this past June in Chicago. Some terrific-looking entertainment software, spanning every category of interest, was on display — and nearly all of the products announced will hit store shelves between now and Christmas. Note that many of the military games announced at CES are covered in "The Desktop General" column found elsewhere in this issue.

ENTREES FROM ACCOLADE

Hot on the heels of a pair of successful titles from last year, Accolade announced two sequels: *Les Manley in: Lost in L.A.* and *Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerebus*. *Lost in L.A.* is the follow-up to *Les Manley in: Search for the King*, the company's solid debut in the graphic adventure field. In the sequel, the player helps Les do his best to avoid the pitfalls and temptations of the Southern California lifestyle — fame, fortune, and females — while trying to solve a sinister crime. Like its predecessor, *Lost in L.A.* is laced with satire (for example, Les gets to question popular singer Maladonna). Our first impression is that the game is even a couple of notches above the original — the animation and graphics are especially well done.

Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerebus is a sequel to last year's *Elvira*, which turned out to be an exceptionally good mystery with lots of playability and depth. Developed by the same team (U.K. Horrorsoft) that did

the original, *Cerebus* features a greater number of locales to explore and more gruesome creatures than the original.

Accolade also debuted *Mike Ditka Football*. This product looked like the result of very careful graphics work, with such features as four viewing angles and a digitized referee. *Ditka* includes teams from all 28 NFL cities; team rosters are made up of imaginary players, but a team construction module allows you to modify the name, number, and stats of each player. Also included are options for practice drills, exhibition games, and a 17-game schedule.

Les Manley and *Elvira II* are expected out by Christmas, and *Ditka* is scheduled to arrive by the start of football season.



Les Manley in: Lost in L.A.



Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerebus



Mike Ditka Football

BRODERBUND OFFERINGS

Several titles were on display from Broderbund. *Patton Strikes Back*, from veteran game designer Chris Crawford, is a strategy game based on the Battle of the Bulge (for more on *Patton*, see "The Desktop General"). Also being shown were *Playmaker Football* (see "First Looks" elsewhere in this issue) and *The Ancient Art of War in the Skies*.

The third in the Ancient Art of War series, *Skies* is a World War I air-combat game in which the player flies a typical (small and rickety) plane from that era. The game includes 11 tactical campaigns, and a program editor for designing campaigns or re-creating World War I air-to-ground battles. Up to six planes can simultaneously engage in dogfighting. *The Ancient Art of War in the Skies* should be available early this fall.



The Ancient Art of War in the Skies

BASEBALL, SCIENCE FICTION FROM DATA EAST

Expect to see three new PC games from Data East this fall. *Bo Jackson Baseball* features both strategic management and nicely animated graphics. You can choose between a human or computer-controlled opponent, play single games or compete in a league for a whole season, and create your own team using more than 100 categories of actual player statistics.

Ultrabots Sanction: Earth is a combination military simulation/combat-adventure game in a science-fiction setting. *Battlefield 2000*, also with science-fiction overtones, is a twenty-first century tank simulation that features a three-dimensional landscape and a construction set that lets players design their own battle scenarios.

Each of Data East's new games looked impressive—the company appears to be taking a more aggressive approach to bringing state-of-the-art titles to the PC market.

DEBUTS FROM DISNEY

As you might expect from the world's leading animation company, Disney showed some graphically dazzling titles. Besides *Hare Raising Havoc* (this issue's cover story), Disney announced several other new titles. *Dick Tracy* is an

action-adventure game that includes dozens of randomly generated crimes for longer overall playing time. *The Rocketeer*, an action-strategy game based on this summer's movie, features some of the smoothest animation we've seen to date. *Stunt Island: The Flying and Filming Simulation* is a somewhat unusual title in which the player selects a plane, flies a variety of stunts, then takes on the role of film director, which involves camera placement, choreography, directing, and editing. Finally, Disney debuted *The Animation Studio*, a feature-packed animation and paint program. The Amiga version, released last year, met with critical acclaim and has been used by several television networks in the creation of animated sequences.

Disney's new products should be available by early fall.



Dick Tracy



The Rocketeer



Stunt Island: The Flying and Filming Simulation

DYNAMIX DUO

A surprising new product from Dynamix—and a bit of a departure for the company—is the upcoming adventure comedy, *The Adventures of Willie Beamish*. Designed for all ages (although much of the humor will go over the heads of younger kids), *Willie Beamish* looks more like an interactive cartoon. It boasts astonishing graphics and animation, as well as a sterling soundtrack. It should be on store shelves this fall.

Another upcoming Dynamix release is *Nova 9*, which should be available by the time you read this. *Nova 9* is a follow-up to the arcade-style space shooter *Stellar 7*.



The Adventures of Willie Beamish



Nova 9

HISTORICAL SIMULATIONS FROM KOEI

Koei, known for its excellent and complex historical simulations of feudal Japan and China, announced four new PC games. In *Romance of the Three Kingdoms II*, you assume the role of one of 350 generals vying for control of China during the second Han Dynasty.

The remaining three titles represent a change in hemisphere for the company. *L'Empereur*, set in late eighteenth-century Europe, puts the player in the role of the young Napoleon, poised to rise to power. *Liberty or Death* is a strategy game based on American history in which the player assumes the role of either Cornwallis or George Washington on the eve of the American Revolution. The third Koei title set in the Occident is *Uncharted Waters*, a role-playing adventure in which the player takes on the identity of a sixteenth-century sea explorer. If these games—all due this fall—retain the quality and depth of Koei's earlier releases, they should do quite well.

17 NEW TITLES FROM KONAMI

Konami appears to be taking the PC software market very seriously with its announcement of 17 new PC titles to be released in the final six months of 1991. Company

spokespersons emphasized Konami's new commitment to quality in this market. Although we didn't get a lot of hands-on time with these games, what we did see looked like the most sophisticated PC software ever published by Konami. The new titles cover most entertainment categories, including action-arcade, sports, role-playing, and simulations.

New action-arcade titles include *The Simpsons' Arcade Game*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Arcade Game*, *Predator 2*, and *Back to the Future III*. New sports titles are *RollerBabes* and *Speedball 2*, while role-playing games include *Mission Impossible*, *Bart Simpson's Adventure*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Adventure*, *Bloodwych*, *Killing Cloud*, *Champions*, *Riders of Rohan*, and *Spacewrecked: 14 Billion Light Years from Earth*. Two simulations, *Top Gun: Head-to-Head*, *Dogfighting Simulator* and *Team Suzuki*, round out the list.

Also announced by Konami was *Baseball Card Collector*, an electronic card collecting product, which is now available.

and it's the first Indy game not based on a film. Company representatives told us that it's the largest and most complex game ever published by Lucasfilm.

Ron Gilbert, designer of last year's award-winning *Secret of Monkey Island*, noted that *LeChuck's Revenge* is probably the most open-ended, or nonlinear, game Lucasfilm has done to date. *LeChuck's Revenge* is designed for players of various skills — each of the three difficulty levels features different puzzles and game paths. Many of the characters from *Monkey Island* have been imported to the sequel.

Both games are expected to release this fall.



Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis



Monkey Island II: LeChuck's Revenge

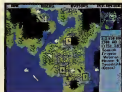
booth, where many of the games shown were demos or nearly complete versions of titles announced at Winter CES. On display were *Gunship 2000*, a helicopter simulation in which the player chooses up to three state-of-the-art choppers (seven different types are available) to fly on one of the hundreds of possible missions. *Gunship 2000* should be in stores by the time you read this.

F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0, *Flames of Freedom*, and *Paragon's Twilight 2000* (see "The Desktop General" elsewhere in this issue) were also on display. Also shown were *Paragon's Megatraveller II: Quest for the Ancients* and *Legend Entertainment's Timequest* (reviewed in this issue) — both games are available now.

Two other titles announced at Winter CES, *Civilization* and *Darklands*, were much further along than when we last saw them. *Civilization*, by Sid Meier (designer of award winners *Railroad Tycoon*, *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, and *F-15 Strike Eagle*), is a vast simulation in which the player begins in 4000 B.C. with a small, nomadic tribe. The goal is to develop an entire civilization from the tribe, while taking into consideration such matters as economics, politics, and defense. Games can be played on either a real-world map or a computer-generated world. From what we saw, *Civilization* has tremendous potential. It is scheduled for release this fall.

The release date for *Darklands*, a fantasy-role-playing game, has been moved from this fall to next spring. A MicroProse spokesperson told us the delay is due to the fact that this is the company's debut in the fantasy role-playing genre, and the extra time will be used to make sure *Darklands* is fully up to standard. The game is set in fifteenth-century Germany, a time when violence and corruption were rampant.

Newly announced by MicroProse is *Codename: White Shadow*, a fantasy simulation set in the year 2001, when all nations have united to fight a new enemy: drugs. The player takes the role of task-force leader, spearheading a massive aerial assault on drug cartel sites. Four hi-tech F-22s are at the player's disposal. *White Shadow* is due for release this fall.



Civilization



Darklands

ORIGIN IN STRIDE

Hot on the heels of the award-winning *Wing Commander*, Origin announced a sequel that should be available by the time this issue hits the newsstands. *Wing Commander II: Vengeance of the Kilrathi* picks up the storyline of the original game, but features a new assortment of fighter ships and new characters. More combat and more missions are promised as well. The demo that we saw was impressive — our

NEW FROM LUCASFILM

Although Lucasfilm Games showed only two new PC titles, it appeared that the company lavished these games with every indulgence — both *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* and *Monkey Island II: LeChuck's Revenge* looked stunning. *Indiana Jones*, a graphic adventure using video rotoscoping, was created by movie-maker Hal Barwood —

NEW GAMES AND SIMULATIONS FROM MICROPROSE

There was a great deal of activity at the MicroProse

hunch is that it should make a lot of *Wing Commander* fans quite happy.

Due out in October, *Strike Commander* is a flight simulator/action-arcade game by

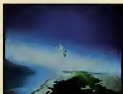


Wing Commander II

Wing Commander designer Chris Roberts that has the look and feel of a winner. The game's story, set in the year 2006, involves a near-bankrupt U.S. government and sovereign multinational corporations. Terrorist activities by the likes of the corporations (as well as the IRS) have fueled an abundance of mercenary action. The player assumes the role of a mercenary-squad pilot, who must try to fly the fine line between right and wrong. The moral dilemma heightens the drama of the game's strategy and action components.

In a dramatic presentation by Origin, *Strike Commander* looked to us like an impressive step in the evolution toward the interactive movie.

A third game introduced by Origin should please yet another group of fans. *Ultima VII: The Black Gate*, set 200 years after the scenario of the previous installment, breaks much new ground. A great deal of work has gone into developing



Strike Commander

a new and highly intuitive game system that, unlike earlier games in the series, includes full-screen displays. Extensive work has also gone into a new, easy-to-use interface and an elaborate sound system. *Ultima* fans should be more than pleasantly surprised with Richard "Lord British" Garriott's decidedly new, rich game environment when it debuts this fall.



Ultima VII: The Black Gate

PSYGNOSIS QUINTET

A respected software publisher of games in the Amiga and Atari ST formats, Psygnosis is entering the PC market with a flurry of titles. *Lemmings* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) was on display at the show, but five more titles are expected this coming fall and winter: *Obitus*, an extensive role-playing arcade/adventure that created a lot of excitement after release in the Amiga format; *Armour-Goddon*, a hi-tech futuristic battle game (see "The Desktop General" for more details); *Aquaventure*, a three-dimensional space shooter; and *Barbarian II* and *Leander*, a pair of fantasy role-playing adventures with arcade-style play.

NEW LINEUP FROM SIERRA

Sierra unveiled a variety of new games at CES, as well as three new educational titles. *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood*, designed by Christy Marx (whose *Conquests of Camelot* won an industry award), is a graphic adventure that features rotoscope animation. *Police Quest III: The Kindred* is the latest installment in the popular series from designer and former cop Jim Walls. The computer game world's most lovable sleazebag returns in *Leisure Suit Larry 5: Passionate Patti Does a Little Undercover Work*. The game features 256-color VGA graphics and a "touch and grope" (no commands are typed) interface. Also new from Sierra is *Hoyle Book of Games, Volume 3*, which features a variety of classic board games such as backgammon, checkers, and dominoes.

On the educational front, Sierra is picking up where it left off with *Mixed Up Mother Goose*. "Bookwyrm" makes his debut as host in *Mixed Up Fairy Tales*. *Castle of Dr. Brain* is a challenging adventure that teaches analytical and problem-solving skills with word games, three-dimensional puzzles, a jigsaw, and so on. Finally, in *EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus*, you play the role of 12-year-old Adam as he and his dolphin friend battle toxic waste, oil spills, fish nets, and other environmental hazards.

All new Sierra titles are slated for release beginning this summer.

Sierra has also embarked on a brave, new quest of its own — The Sierra Network (TSN). This new online telecommunications service is an attempt by Sierra to create a

system on which thousands of PC players can interact through a variety of games. We'll have much more to say about TSN in the next issue, but if you want more information right away, call 1-800-SIERRA-1.



Conquests of the Longbow



Police Quest III



Leisure Suit Larry 5



Mixed Up Fairy Tales



EcoQuest

QUARTET FROM SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

If you're like most PC game players who fell in love with *Tetris*, you probably still see descending blocks in your sleep. Get ready for more. Spectrum Holobyte announced at CES that *Tetris* designer Alexey Pajitnov is working on *Super Tetris*. The game, due out shortly, promises to be more difficult than the original—but equally addictive.

Although we didn't see a working prototype of *Super Tetris* at the show, we did get our hands on *Wordtris*—also to be released soon. *Wordtris*, a cross between *Tetris* and a word puzzle, is compulsively playable—we made several stops at Spectrum's booth during the show for a quick round. As in *Tetris*, blocks descend—but each one contains a letter; your job is to create words as you fight the clock. *Wordtris* includes a variety of intriguing game options.

Also new from Spectrum is *Crisis in the Kremlin*, a geopolitical simulation based on the current state of affairs in the Soviet Union. The game's lead programmer is Vladimir Baculyn, a Soviet resident. Due for release in the early fall, *Crisis* challenges the player to stay in power for 30 years while managing economic, social, and political policies, budgets, and

the media.

Finally, Spectrum announced a PC version of Atari's arcade mega-hit *Race Driver*. This fast action game lets the player choose one of four high-performance cars to race across obstacle-laden tracks against the clock or against a friend. *Race Driver* is scheduled for release in October.

NEW TITLES FROM VIRGIN GAMES

Virgin Games, formerly Virgin Mastertronic, announced three new PC titles. *Vengeance of Excalibur* is the sequel to last year's *Spirit of Excalibur*. Combining elements of fantasy role-playing, graphic adventure, combat simulation, and arcade play, *Vengeance* requires you to organize knights and various countrymen in order to explore hundreds of locales in search of the Shadowmaster, the Lord of Demons, summoned by Morgan Le Fay in *Spirit of Excalibur*. The new game should be available by the time you read this.

Thunderhawk is a simulation that puts the player in the pilot's seat of an AH-73M helicopter gunship, the Pentagon's brand-new chopper that, to date, has never flown in combat. The simulation, slated for a fall release, includes six campaigns and 60 missions.

Also on display were *Conan the Cimmerian*, an arcade/role-playing adventure, and *Shuttle*, a carefully detailed and impressively comprehensive simulation (which debuted at last winter's CES) of NASA's space shuttle. Both *Conan* and *Shuttle* will be available this fall.

NEW FROM THREE-SIXTY

Besides its new strategy war game, *Patriot* (see "The Desktop General"), ThreeSixty announced 1992 *Winter Olympics*, a simulation designed in conjunction with ABC Sports. Architects who designed the Olympic courses provided actual topographical maps for use in developing the game, which features a first-person perspective in events like the downhill, slalom, ski jump, luge, bobsled, and biathlon.

Also announced by ThreeSixty was *Theatre of War*, a game that marries chess, history, war gaming, and strategy on a three-dimensional battlefield. Men and weapons range from the Medieval era to the present day.

All new titles are scheduled for a fall release.

AND MANY MORE...

MicroLeague Sports announced a new product for sports card collectors. Due out around Labor Day, the *MicroLeague Sports Card Manager* is designed to track the current values and catalog inventories of sports collectibles and memorabilia. MicroLeague also announced a joint venture agreement to produce and distribute Rotisserie League products for the fantasy baseball league market.

A PC version of *Go*, the ancient oriental board game, was on display from Toyogo at CES. *Nemesis*, the product name for Toyogo's *Go*, is played on a

grid by two players (or one player against a computer opponent). *Go*, considered the far east's equivalent to chess, is an extremely popular game that originated in China nearly 4,000 years ago, and is played today by people of all ages in Japan. Unlike chess, *Go* is simple to learn; but like chess, it's difficult to master.

Nemesis includes game analysis modules, hints, handicapping for unevenly matched players, selectable skill levels, and a choice of board sizes. The products should be available late this summer.

Two distinctive new titles from California Dreams were on display at CES. In *Solidarity*, a political simulation, you assume the role of the leader of Poland's workers' union as you try to free your country from the Soviet military and economic squeeze. You must deal with a variety of game components, such as strikes, fundraising, food shortages, media relations, and so on.

Wreck Hunters is the working title of California Dreams' role-playing adventure in which you explore sunken ships for loot in your hi-tech submarine. The goal is to pay off your \$23 million debt, so when selling any treasures you find, you must decide whether collectors, museums, or greedy scavengers will give you the most money for your booty. More than 250 historical shipwrecks are available to explore. Both *Solidarity* and *Wreck Hunters* are due out this fall.

Tennis fans should keep a lookout for Ubi Soft's *Pro Tennis Tour 2*, which could be the best PC tennis simulation yet. The designers have made some outstanding improvements on the original game, and added a bevy of new game options.

SSI, a veteran publisher of war games and fantasy role-playing titles, surprised a

number of CES attendees with the announcement of a sports title, *Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball*. The game was on display and appeared to be packed with features and options. *Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball* not only looked good, but it also seemed to strike a nice balance between on-field action, managerial strategy, and management of player statistics.

A PC version of *Chip's Challenge*, a 144-level puzzle game first introduced for the Atari Lynx, was announced by Epyx. *Chip's Challenge* is loaded with stiff challenges, and is aimed at an adult audience — the first eight levels introduce the player to the game's concepts, and subsequent levels become progressively more difficult.

First there was *SimCity*, then *SimEarth* — now Maxis is bringing *SimAnt* to the PC. In this simulation — which features three selectable viewing perspectives — the player is in charge of an ant colony out to conquer a suburban backyard. The player controls one ant and tries to manage the behavior of the colony while dealing with rival red ants, a spider, and human feet. The ultimate goal is to reach the house and, of course, its food supply. Like Maxis' previous simulations, *SimAnt* is positioned to provide both entertainment and educational value. From what we saw, *SimAnt* is even better than having your own ant farm. It's due for release in late 1991.

Canada-based ReadySoft debuted two animation-intensive games, *Space Ace II: Boff's Revenge* and *Guy Spy*. The latter is an adventure game in which the player controls the animated game characters. Both titles are expected to be available this fall.

New World Computing had two titles on display which should be available now. Both *Might and Magic III* and *Planet's Edge* are handsome games with

a very clean design.

Besides showing *Castles* (see last issue's "Desktop General"), Interplay had on hand *The Lord of the Rings, Vol. 2: The Two Towers*, which includes



The Lord of the Rings, Vol. 2: The Two Towers

several improvements over the very solid first volume. *The Two Towers* includes an improved interface as well as an automapping feature. Also announced by Interplay was *The Bard's Tale Construction Kit*.



The Bard's Tale Construction Kit

In a different vein, Interplay announced *Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary*, a 3-D space flight simulator which combines role-playing elements and space combat. The game fea-



Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary

tures digitized model graphics and musical score based on the original series. *Star Trek* will be available shortly.

Electronic Arts' booth was filled with product demonstrations from its many affiliates (SSI, Interstel, Mindcraft, Ocean of America, to name a few). Electronic Arts itself showed *Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge*, *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, *Earl Weaver II*, and *Powermonger* — all available as we go to press.

A sequel to *The Learning Company's* best-selling edu-



Reader Rabbit 2

cational title, *Reader Rabbit*, looked splendid. Designed for kids aged 5 to 8, *Reader Rabbit 2* sports charming graphics and animation as well as excellent sound. Another educational title that impressed us was Davidson's *Headline Harry and the Great Paper Race*, an adventure for ages 10 and up in which the player takes on the role of a cub reporter. U.S. geography and history (1950-1990) are taught as the player gathers clues and facts to get his scoop in ahead of some pretty dubious yellow journalists. Both *Reader Rabbit 2* and *Headline Harry* are due out very shortly.

U.K.-based U.S. Gold, distributed in the U.S. by Accolade, showed three new PC titles: *Cybercon III*, a science-fiction adventure; *Murder!*, a whodunit loaded with red herrings, a time limit, and a huge multitude of unique scenarios for replayability; and *The Godfather*, a graphic — and quite gory — adventure based on the award-winning film. We should see these titles before Christmas.

GP

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